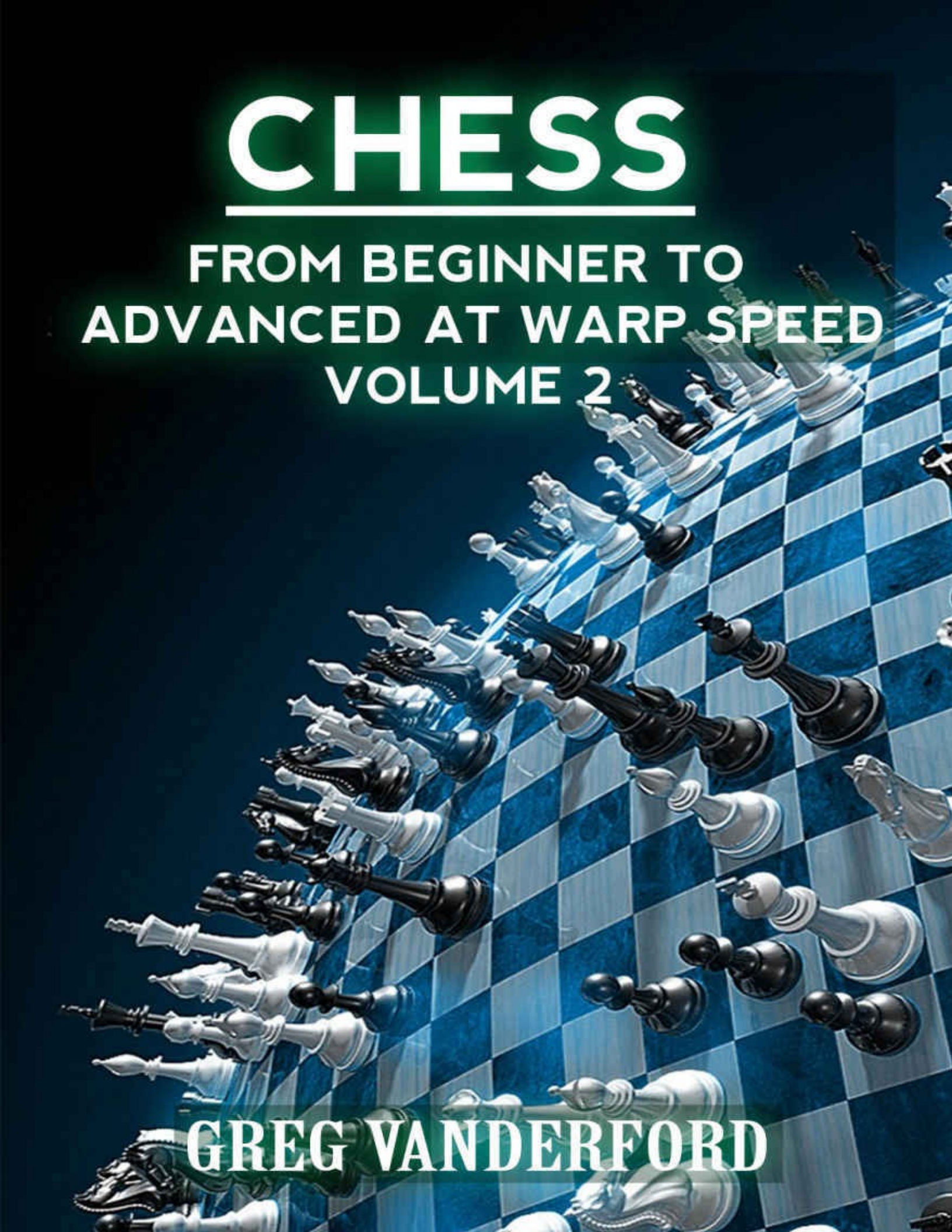
CHESS

FROM BEGINNER TO ADVANCED AT WARP SPEED VOLUME 2



GREG VANDERFORD

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Introduction

Chess is a wonderfully complex and challenging game that has been around since the 6th century CE. It is also a sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds, especially in this digital age in which we are living when you can easily log in to a computer and instantly begin a game with someone halfway across the globe.

As you improve at chess and learn some basic tactics, strategy and openings, which we covered in volume I of this series it may feel like you have already digested quite a lot of information and you will begin to win more games at your level of competition. In this volume we will cover more advanced concepts that will bring your game to the next level including advanced defensive technique, endgames, more in depth openings, advanced tactics and much more.

This very system has been used to train thousands of players from a beginner to an advanced level over the course of my chess teaching career. Now you have the opportunity to go through a process that has been proven to produce strong chess players in a very short period of time and with more ease than any chess training system that exists.

By the end of the book, if you have worked through the entire volume, you will be ready take on stronger chess competition by playing in formal matches and tournaments, and should have an increased chess rating of at least 100 points.

I am excited for you to continue your training and take the next step on the amazing journey that we can all enjoy, as fellow chess players and students!

Lesson 1: DOUBLE ATTACK/FORK

As you have learned in the previous volume, a fork or double attack is one of the important tools to gain advantage in a chess game. In this lesson, we will see examples where the solutions are a bit more difficult than just forking in one move.

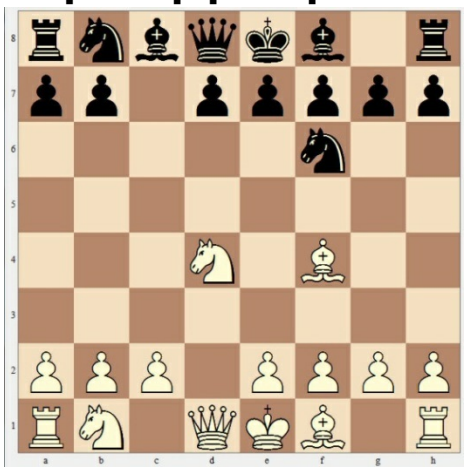
We will start with two basic positions which show what a fork and a double attack is.

In the first example, White by playing 1.***Qe4*** attacks (forks) both Black Rooks and one of them will be lost.

In the second example, after the same 1.***Qe4*** move, White creates a double attack. One of the attacks is toward the Rook on a8 and the other threat is checkmate with 2.***Qh7***. Black naturally will have to defend against the checkmate threat, and therefore the Rook will be lost.

Here is a famous short game that nicely shows the concept of fork.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.Bf4 cxd4 4.Nd4

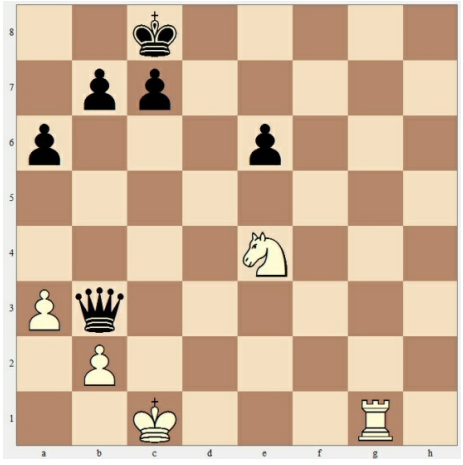


White's last move is a mistake as it allows the following little combination.

Black now sacrifices a Pawn with **4...e5!** This seems like a fork. But why can't the White Bishop simply capture the Pawn with **5.Bxe5**?

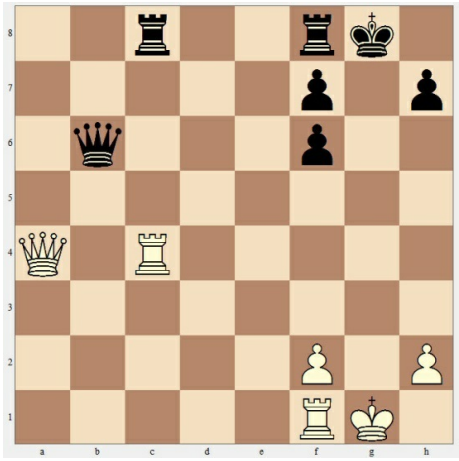
Here is why. Black has a second fork with **5...Qa5+**. This will allow Black to win the White Bishop.

Let's see a few examples where there has to be some "setup" done before the actual forking move.



In the position above, White needs to first force the Black King to d7 with **1.Rg8+**. Then after **1...Kd7**, White will play **2.Nc5+** forking and winning the Black Queen.

In the next position, White again needs some creativity to imagine a potential of a fork.



In this position, the dream would be for your Queen to jump over the Rook on c4 and land on g4. Of course, that is not allowed by the rules. However, White can still achieve that idea by first trading Rooks with **1.Rxc8 Rxc8** and then **2.Qg4+** winning the Black Rook on c8.

Yet in other cases, reaching the ultimate goal (to fork) requires material sacrifice as in the following two puzzles.

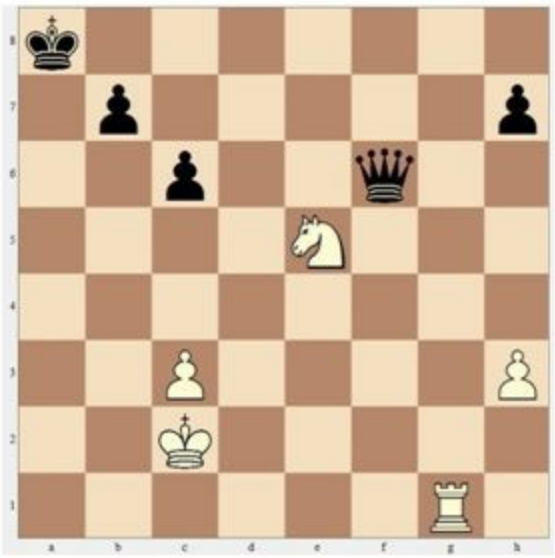
The solution in first one is ***1. Rg8+ Kxg8 2.Nf6+*** forking the King and Queen. If Black does not capture the Rook but instead play ***Kh7***, White would still play 2. Nf6 but this time it is a checkmate. In the

second puzzle, the solution is ***1.Qxf8+ Kxf8 2.Ne6+*** forking the King and Queen.

Lesson 1 – Test

1-6. Find the solution to the next six puzzles. It is White to move and the idea is to win material.

1.



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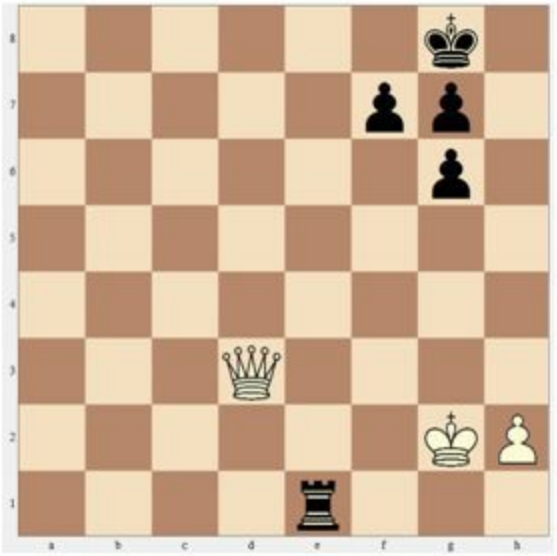
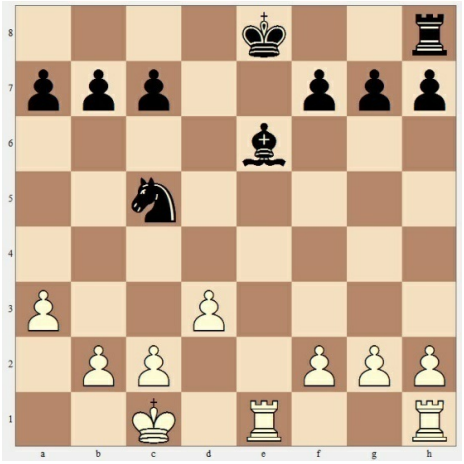
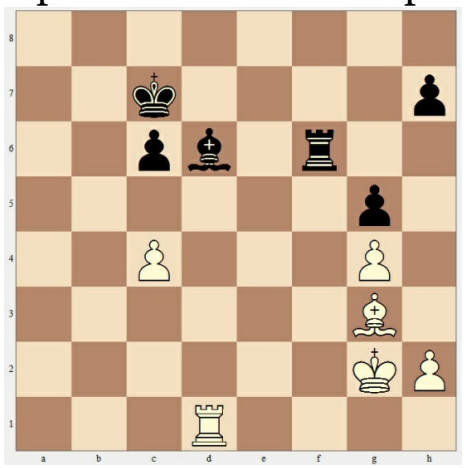


Lesson 2: PIN

Another powerful tool in tactics is the pin. Let's learn about some tricks on how to surprise your opponent with one.
Here are two examples of pins that look harmless at first appearance.



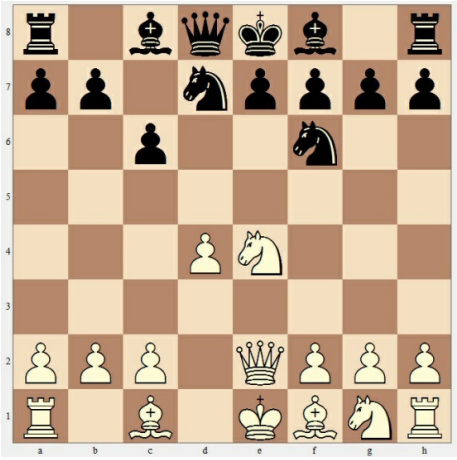
However, White can take advantage of the fact that the Black Bishop on e6 is pinned. The first step is to attack the Knight on c5 with **1.d4**. After the Knight moves away for example **1...Nd7**, White will proceed with **2.d5** and the Bishop is lost because it is pinned.



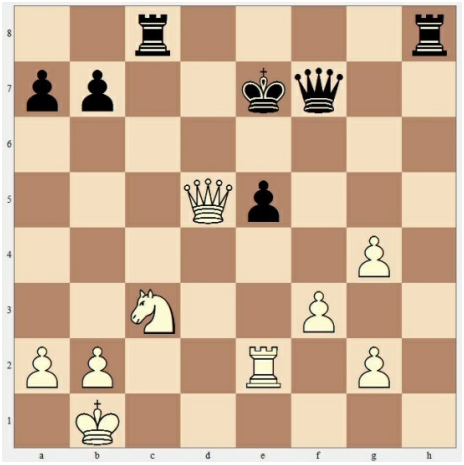
In the above position, White has a little combination with ***1.Rxd6***. After ***1...Rxd6,*** White has ***2.c5.*** Since the Rook is pinned, White will win a Bishop in this sequence after capturing Rook on d6 next move.

Here is a short game which is famous trap, one that many players have fallen for.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Qe2
White's last move is not so great (because the Queen steps right in front of the Bishop on f1), but it is a tricky one.
5...Ngf6 This move is a blunder. Better would have been 5...e6 for example.

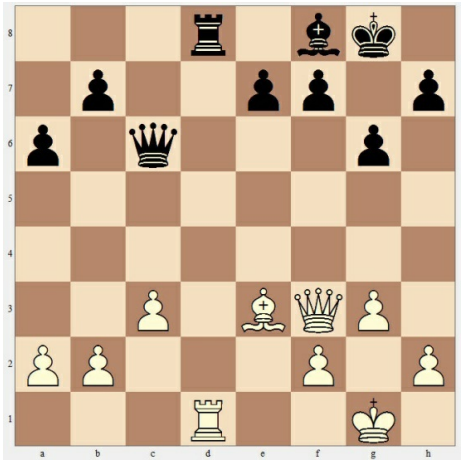


Now White has **6.Nd6** checkmate.
In the next example, Black first needs to force the White King into the pin setup.



Here there is no pin at the moment. But Black can create one with **1... Rh1+**. Then after **2.Kc2**, all of a sudden the Knight on c3 finds itself in a pin and therefore **2...Qxd5** wins a free Queen.

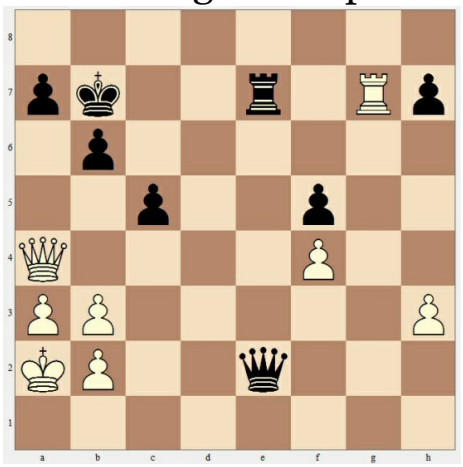
The next example shows a combination where the pin helps even to checkmate.



In this position, the natural 1.Qxc6 bxc6 with 2.Rxd8 winning the Rook does not work. Black has a great in-between move after 1.Qxc6. 1...Rxd1+ and then after 2.Kg2 bxc6 leaving White a Rook down.

On the other hand White can sacrifice the Queen on f3, by **1.Rxd8!** as after **1...Qxf3 2.Bh6** Black is in trouble.

Here is an example of the amazing "cross-pin".



In the position above White can win at least a Rook with **1.Qe8!** Black cannot capture the White Queen with Rxe8 as it is pinned. After ***1... Rxg7*** White will respond with ***2. Qxe2*** with serious material advantage.

Lesson 2 – Test

1-6. In the next six puzzles, it is Black to move and the task is either to win material or to checkmate.

1.

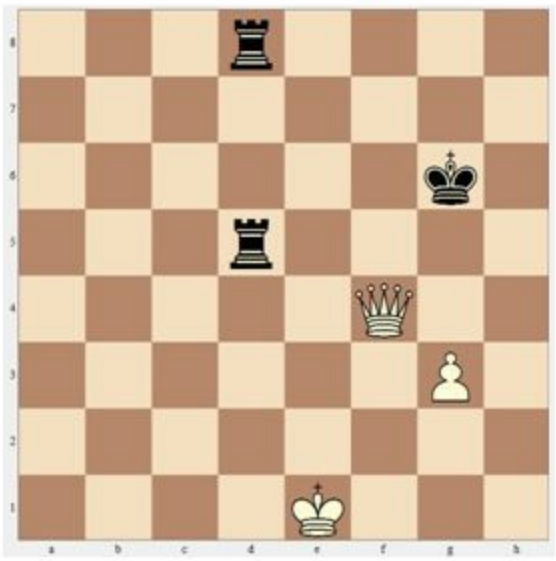
2.

3.

4.

5.

6.



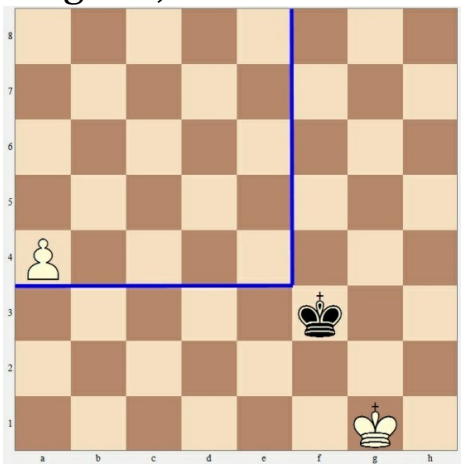
Lesson 3: PAWN SQUARE RULE

So far, we have mostly focused on various tactics on how to gain (material) advantage. In this lesson we change focus and start learning about endgame techniques. Knowing how to win a "won position" or how to save a "drawn" endgame is just as important of a skill as to know how to get there.

Let's start with King and Pawn endgames as those are the basis of all other endgames. Pawns in endgames often become very important as their potential to get promoted increases significantly.

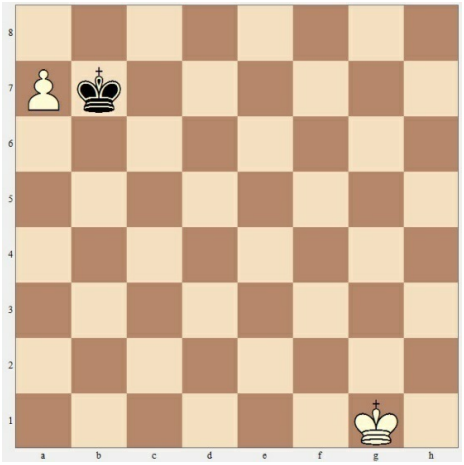
When a Pawn has no Pawn from the opponent to stop its path, it is called a **passed Pawn**. Once you have a passed Pawn, the other side has two potential defensive strategies. It is either:
a) to try to make sure that the promotion square will be guarded by the time the Pawn reaches the next to last rank.
or
b) to have his/her own Pawn promote before or right after you promote your Pawn. We call this situation a *Pawn race*.

Through the following diagram, we will learn about the "Square Rule".



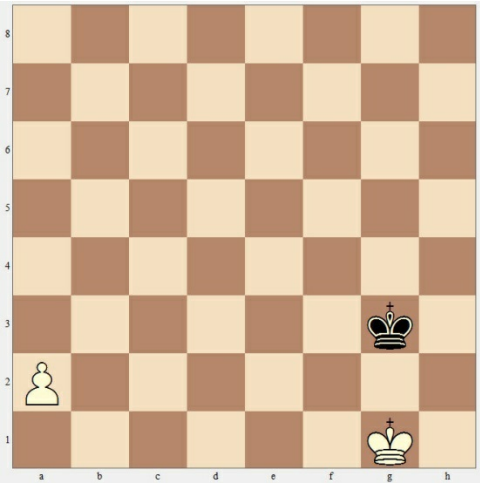
In the position above, if the Black King succeeds to step into the "square of the Pawn" (highlighted on the diagram above) the Black King will reach the key a8 promotion square timely.

Therefore, if it is White move here then White wins ***(1.a5 Ke4 2.a6 Kd5 3.a7 and the Black King arrives too late).*** But if it is Black's turn, Black makes it just in time with ***1...Ke4 2.a5 Kd5 3.a6 Kc6 4.a7 Kb7***.



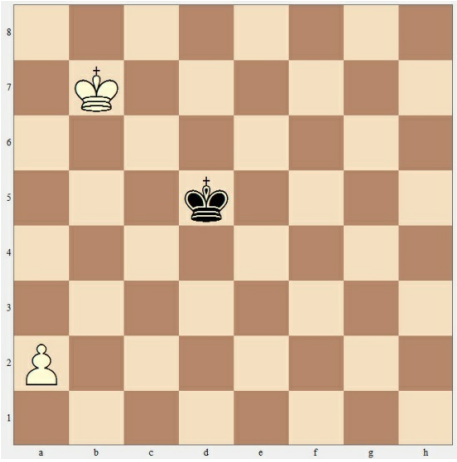
As we know that both the King as well as the Pawn can only move one square at the time, it becomes a very predictable race between the two (the King and the Pawn).

Of course the only exception to that is when a Pawn is still on its initial square and can choose to advance one or two squares as shown in the next diagram.

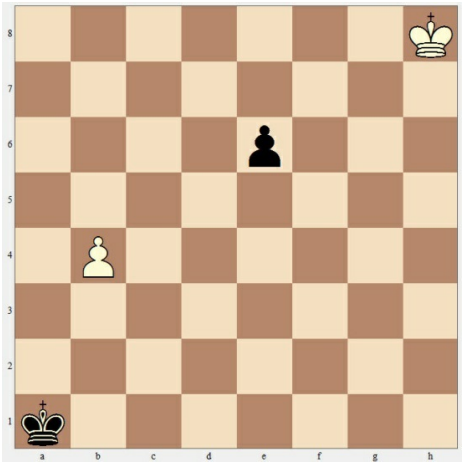


In this position, if it Black's turn to move, the Black King can easily catch the White Pawn on time ***(1...Kf4 2.a4 Ke5 3.a5 Kd6 4.a6 Kc7 5.a7 Kb7*** and Black will capture the Black Pawn on the next move). However, if it is White move then as the Pawn will advance to a4 immediately and the King will not be able to step into the "Pawn's square" ***(1.a4 Kf4 2.a5 Ke5 3.a6 Kd6 4.a7 Kc7 and 5.a8 Queening the Pawn).***

Of course all of the above positions assume that the White King too far away to help as shown in these examples, and it is unable to keep the Black King away from its path toward the promotion square (a8 in this case).
For example, if the White King would be on b7 then even if the Black King is as close as being on d5 would not help stop the promotion of the "a" Pawn.



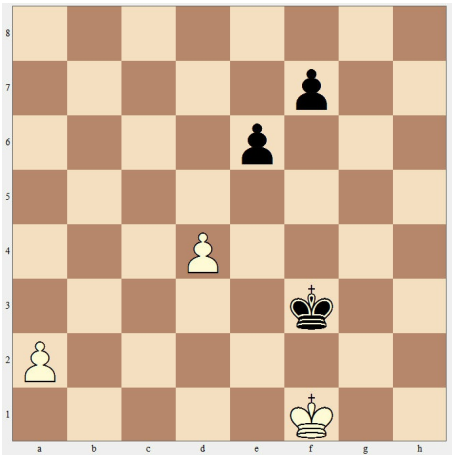
White would simply play ***1.a4 Kc5 2.a5 Kb5 and 3.a6***.
In the next example, neither King is able to "catch" the other side's Pawn. Therefore, it becomes a pure race between the Pawns.



If White moves first in this position then White will win the race with ***1.b5 e5 2.b6 e4 3.b7 e3 4.b8Q*** (White promote the Pawn first) and after ***4...e2*** White can simply guard the (e1) promotion square by playing ***5.Qe5+*** and win the Black Pawn.

Another important issue to pay attention to in such Pawn races is if either of the Pawns arrives to the promotion square with a check, or not.

Let's look next at the tricky Pawn endgame.



Here the straight forward advance of the passed Pawn on the "a" file fails as after 1.a4 Ke4 2.a5 Kd5 3.a6 Kc6 the Black King is right on time.

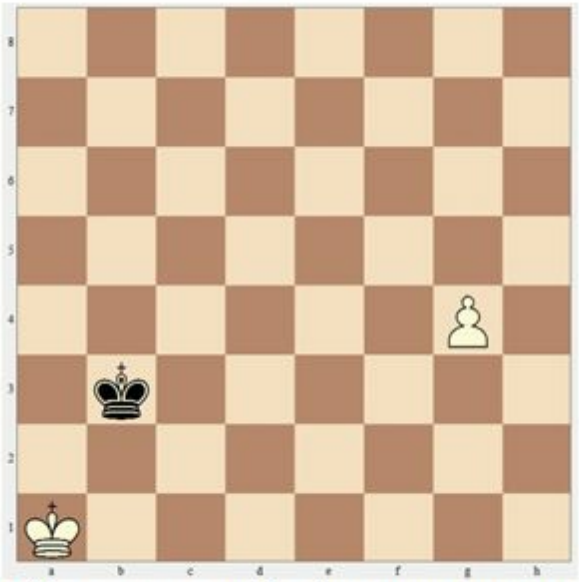
Amazingly White can still win though! White first has to play 1.d5! sacrificing the “d” Pawn. After Black captures with 1...exd5, the Pawn on d5 will be in the way of the King toward the b7 square.

White wins after 2.a4 Ke4 3.a5 as now the Pawn is unstoppable.

Lesson 3 - Test

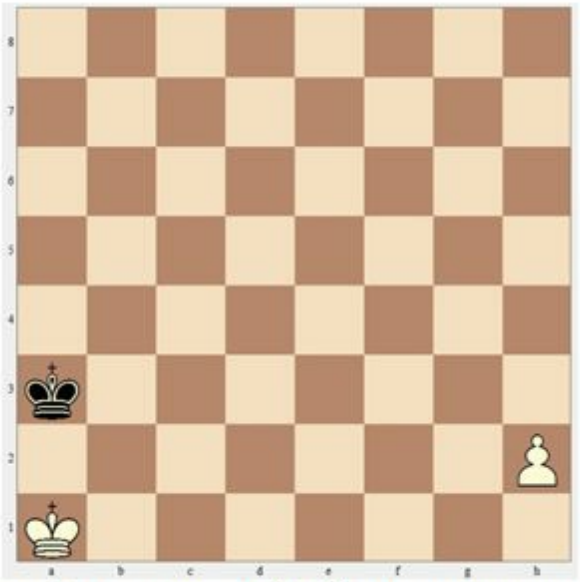
1-4. In the next four puzzles, it is Black to move in all of them. Which side is winning, or is it a draw?

1.



White wins/Black wins/Draw

2.



White wins/Black wins/Draw

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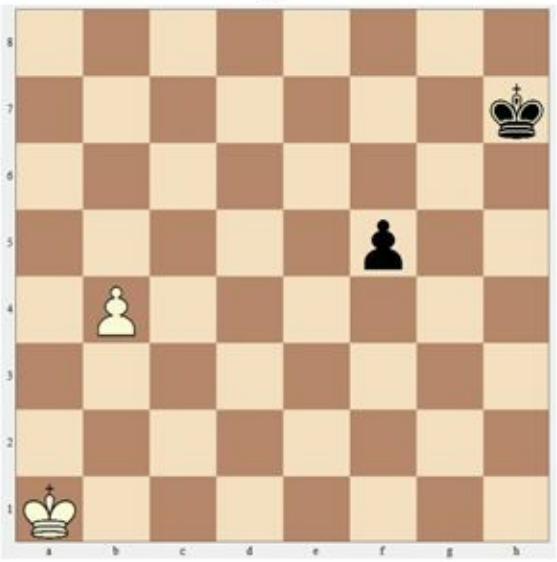
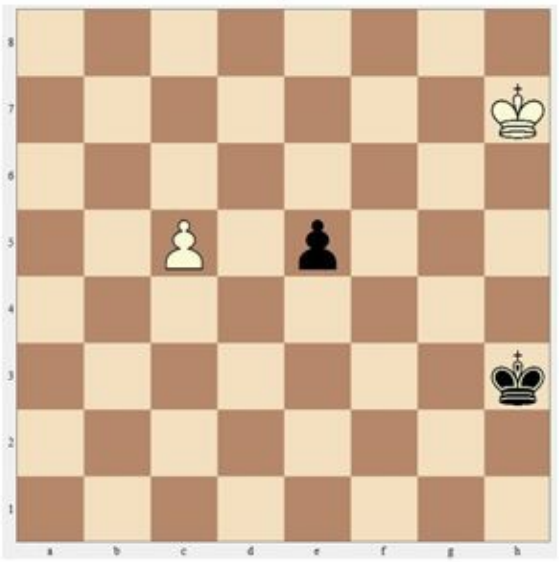


White wins/Black wins/Draw

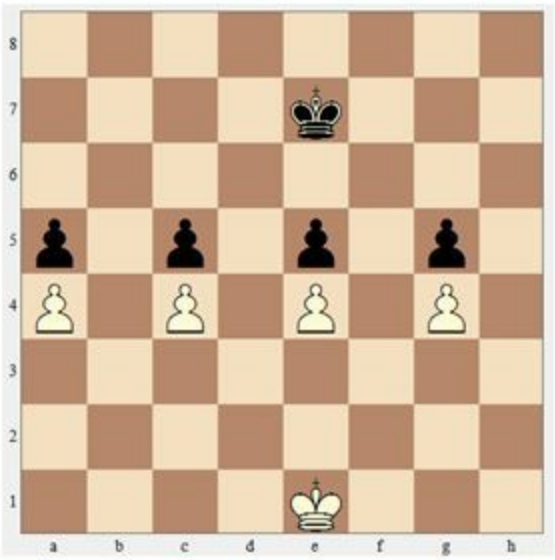
4.



White wins/Black wins/Draw

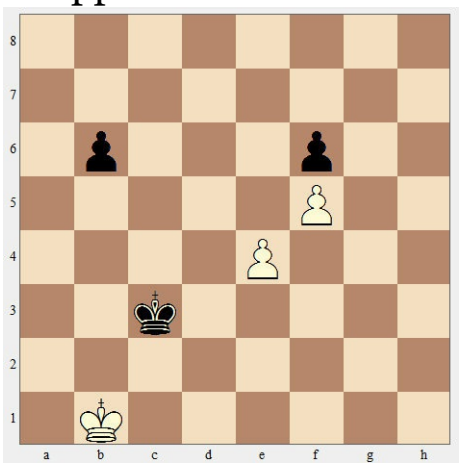
Lesson 4: CREATING PASSED PAWNS

Once you already have a passed Pawn, it is good to know what to do with it. Best would be to try to promote as soon as you can. But what to do if your Pawn does not have a clear path yet, just like in the situations below?

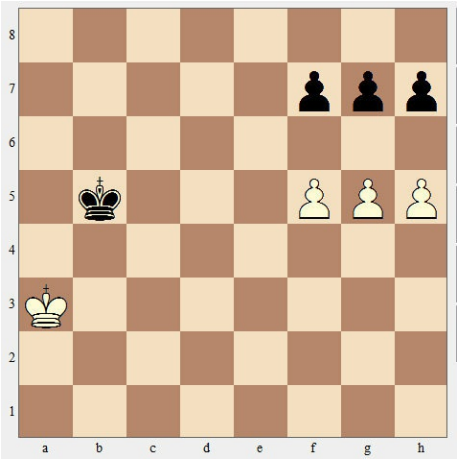


Well, in such positions, neither side is able to create a passed Pawn. Therefore, the game is likely to end in a draw.

However, there are other situations where even though it seems that one side or the other is unable to create a passed Pawn, and yet there is a trick to still make it happen.



For example in the position above, White can play **1.e5** to break through. With that little Pawn sacrifice White makes sure that either the "e" Pawn or the one on the "f" file will get a clear path to promotion.
The next example is a very famous and beautiful endgame position.



In this position, White has an amazing plan which can win the game, despite the fact that the three Pawns on the Kingside face each other. The reason is that the White Pawns are further advanced.

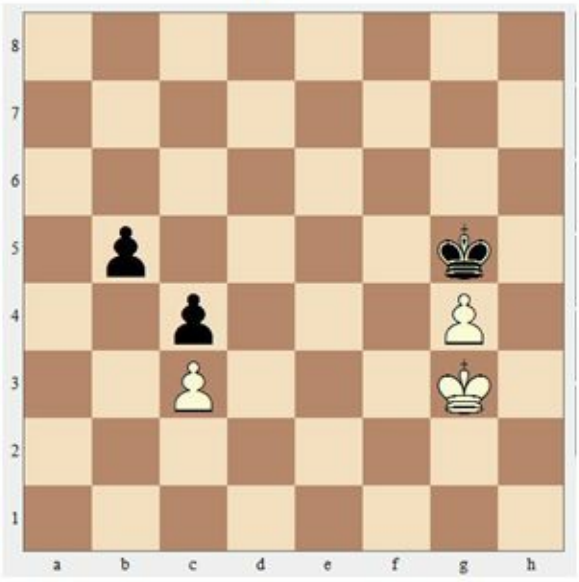
The only solution that gives White the win is **1.g6!** Now if Black plays *1...hxg6, then 2.f6! gxf6 3.h6* and White has just created a passed Pawn and a won game. If Black plays *1...fxg6, then 2.h6! gxh6 3.f6*. White will once again promote within a couple of moves to reach a won position.

If it was Black to play in the same starting position, then Black wins with ***1...Kc5***. If White responds with ***2.g6***, then ***2...fxg6! 3.h6 gxh6 4.f6*** and the Black King step into the "f" Pawn's "square" with ***4... Kd6.***

Lesson 4 - Test

1-4. It is Black to move in the next four puzzles. How can Black create a passed Pawn in all four positions to reach a winning endgame?

1.



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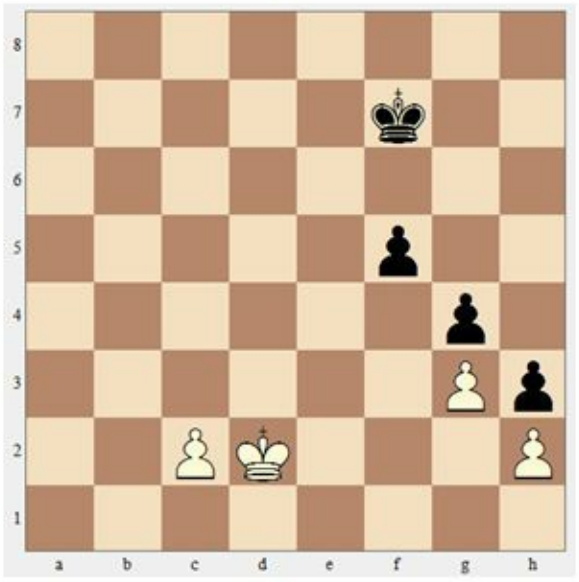

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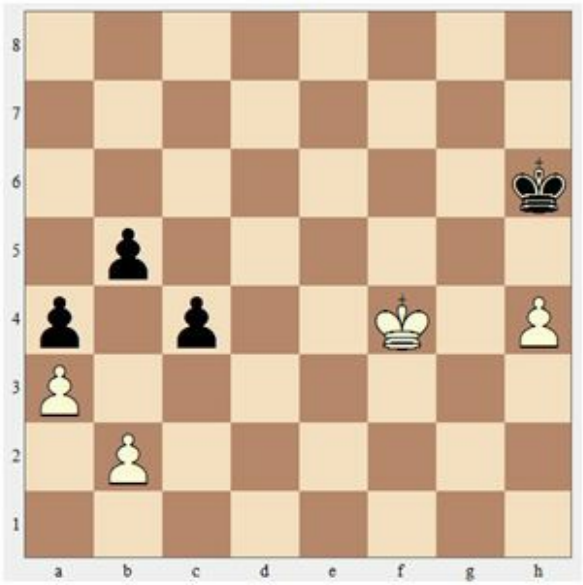

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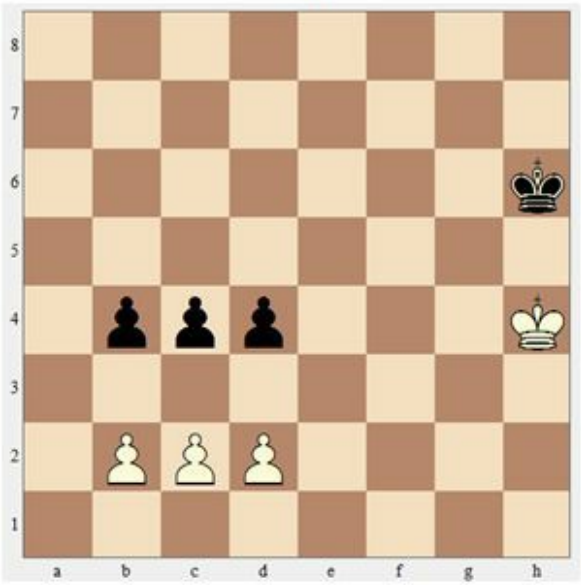
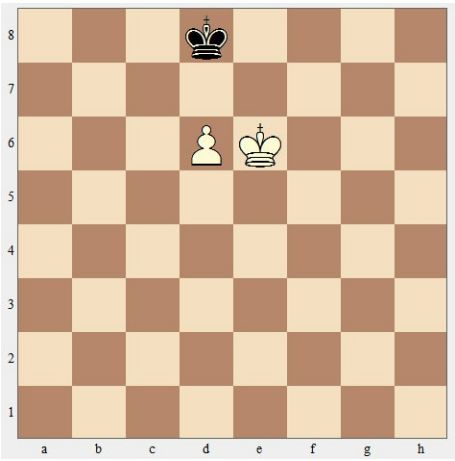


Lesson 5: SIMPLE PAWN ENDGAME

Now let's look at Pawn endgames where the other side's King is right in front of the passed Pawn. In such situations, the only way the passed Pawn can be promoted is if the King can be forced to leave the square in front of the Pawn. In these types of endgames, it is extremely important to pay attention to know which side is to move.

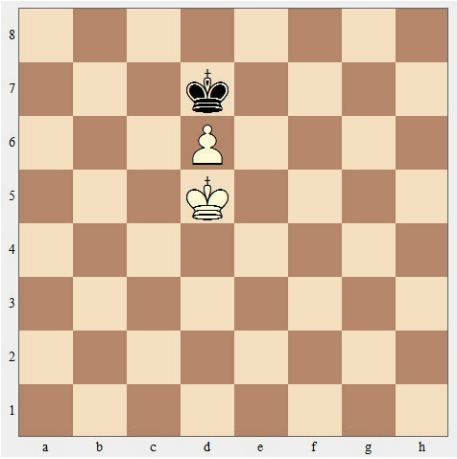


In the position above, it is very important which side is to move.

If it is White to move, then after ***1.d7,*** Black must play ***1...Kc7*** allowing ***2.Ke7*** which leads to a losing game. After ***1.d7***, if Black could "pass" as in some other board games, then everything would be OK for Black. However, in chess making a move is not only your right, but also an obligation at the same time. In such situations in chess where you would wish you wouldn't have to move, it is called by the German word **zugzwang**.

On the other hand, if it is Black's turn, then after ***1...Ke8*** White cannot win. For example, if ***2.d7+ Kd8 3.Kd6*** the game ends in stalemate.

In the next position, it is Black to move.

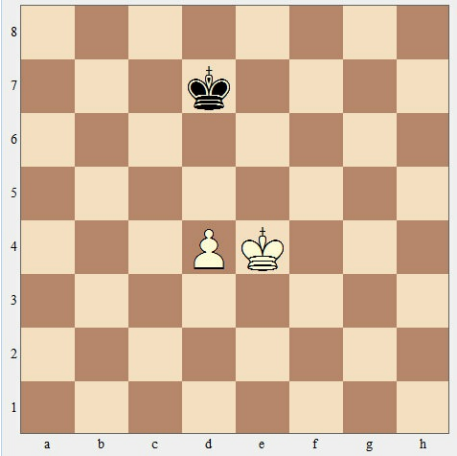


This is a very important chess pattern to remember. Black has three options to move the King. But only one of them saves the game. It is ***1…Kd8!***

The Black King needs to pick the ***middle square*** (of the three). The reason is that it needs to be in a flexible position to move to the same side as the White King when it moves to the 6th rank next to the pawn. For example, if White plays ***2.Ke6***, then the response should be ***2… Ke8*** or if ***2.Kc6***, then ***Kc8***. Then in either case, after ***3.d7+ Kd8***, the game ends in a draw after ***4.Kd6*** stalemate.

However, both ***1…Kc8 and 1…Ke8*** would be losing because then after ***2.Kc6 (or 2.Ke6) 2…Kd8 3.d7***, Black will have no choice but to allow the "d" Pawn to promote.

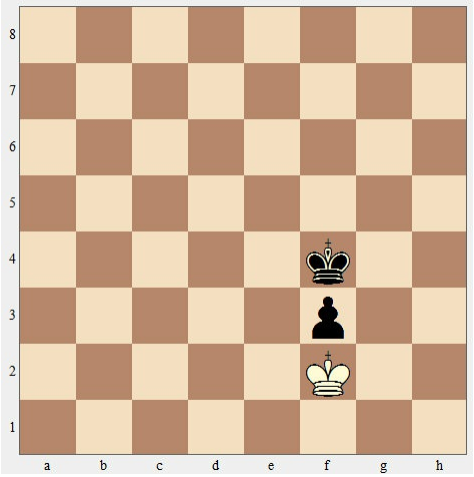
Now let's learn about the "**opposition**".



Here, White has only one way to win the game which is by playing ***1.Kd5!***

With that move, White would gain “the opposition”. It means that the Black King will have to give up its current position. For example, if ***1... Kc7***, then White moves the King to the other side of the Pawn with ***2.Ke6***. Or if ***1...Ke7 then 2.Kc6***. The game can continue the following way after ***2...Kd8 3.d5 Kc8 4.d6 Kd8 5.d7 Ke7 6.Kc7*** and White wins.

In the next position, White has to gain “the opposition” to save the day.

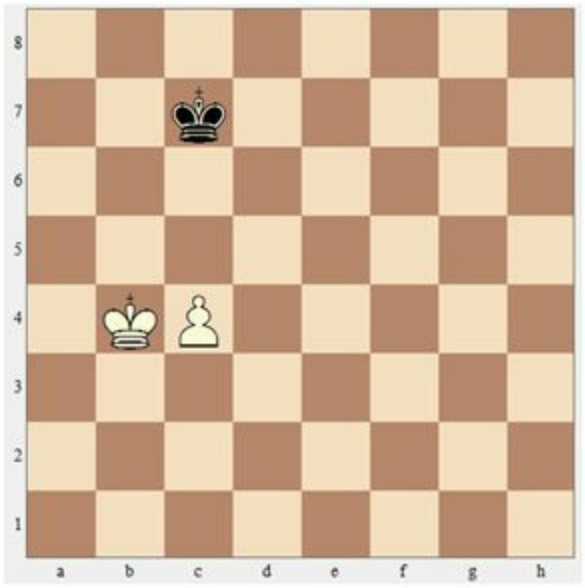


The correct move is ***1.Kd2!*** For example, ***1...Kc4 2.Kc2 Kb4 3.Kb2 c4 4.Kc2 c3*** and now the only good move is ***5.Kc1!*** The rest is easy ***5...Kb3 6.Kb1 c2+ 7.Kc1 Kc3*** stalemate.

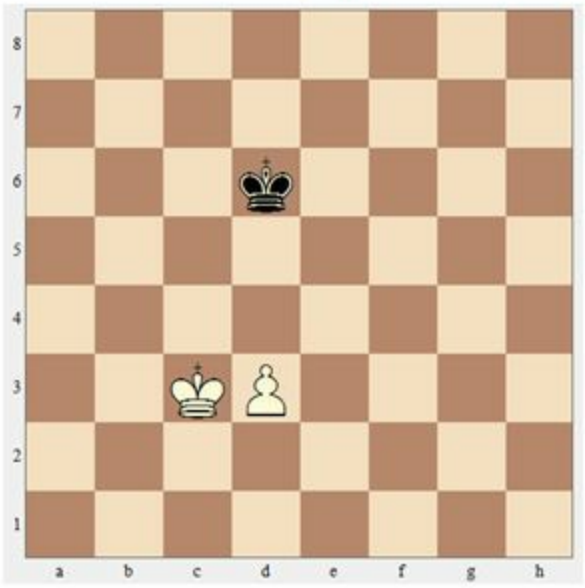
Lesson 5 – Test

1-4. Find the key move for White in each of the following four positions.

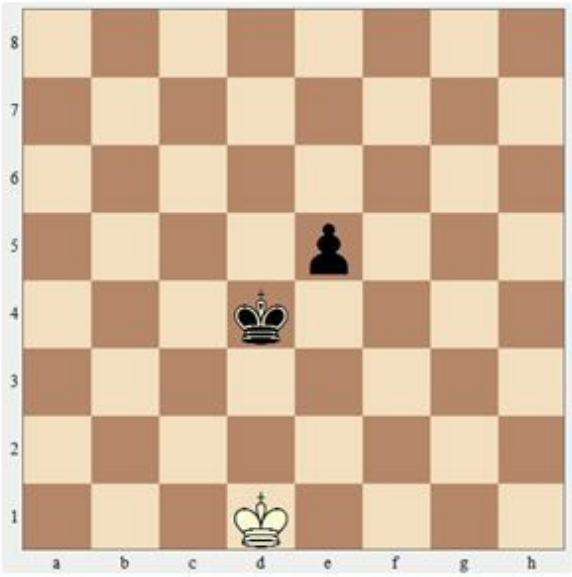
1.



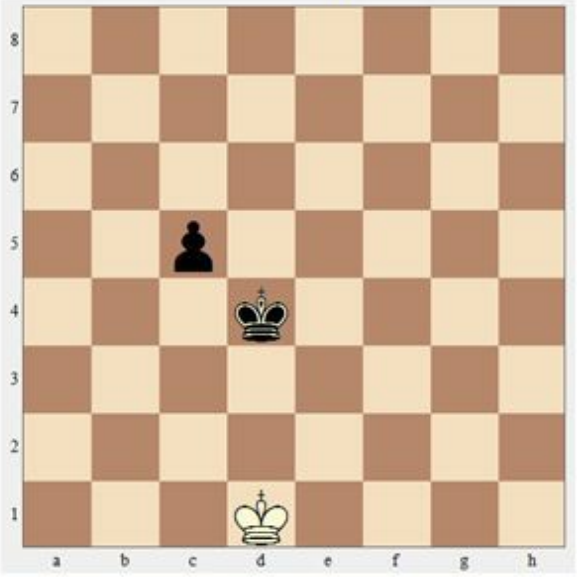
2.



3.



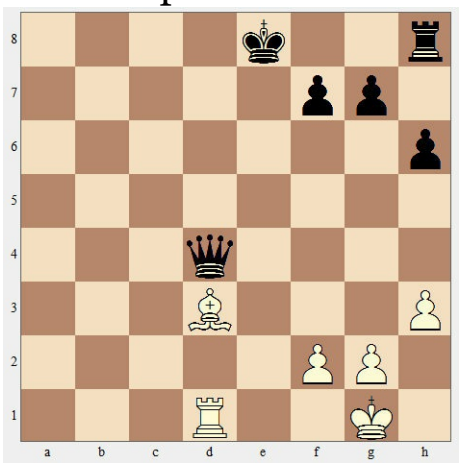
4.



Lesson 6: DISCOVERY

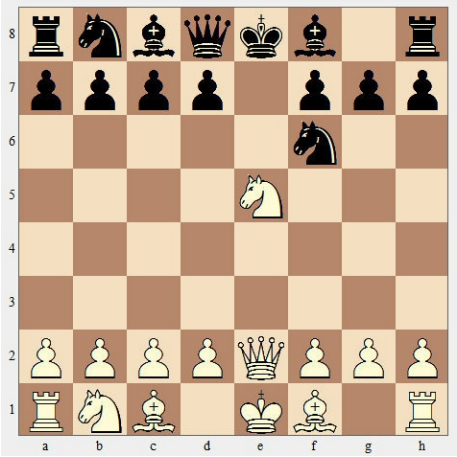
In this lesson, we will learn about an extremely powerful tactical tool: **Discovery**.

Discovered checks (or attacks) are very special double attacks. What happens is that by moving a piece, another piece behind it can give a check (or attack an enemy piece).
Let's see a couple of basic examples on it.



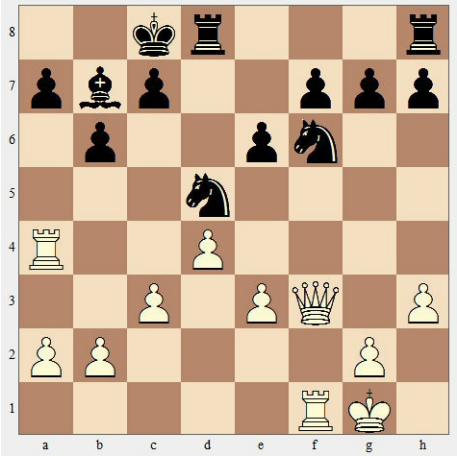
In the above position, Black has a major material advantage. However, if White finds the correct move then that picture is about to change completely.
White can play ***1.Bb5+*** because the White Bishop moves away to check the Black King. All of a sudden, the "d" file is opened up and therefore the Rook on d1 targets the Black Queen. Black must get out of the check which means that Black will lose the Queen.

Here is a very famous miniature (short) game.
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 Nxe4 This move is already the first mistake. Black should play 3...d6 first, and only after the retreat of the White Knight should Black go for the Pawn on e4.
4.Qe2 Nf6 This move is a major mistake. Better is 4...d5 but White gets a little better position after 5.d3 anyway.

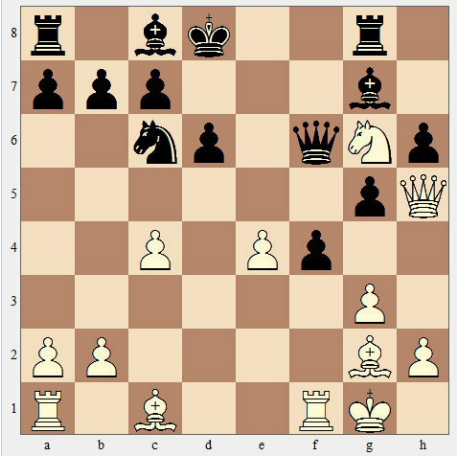


And now, surprisingly White can afford to place the Knight on c6 even though it doesn't look like a safe square. This is because **5.Nc6+** is a discovered check (The White Queen on e2 attacks the Black King). Therefore, the Knight is completely safe there. Moreover, White can win the Black Queen.

The next example on discovery does not involve a check.

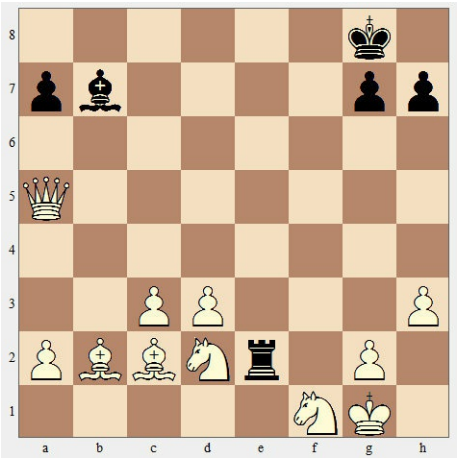


In this position, Black can gain significant material advantage by playing 1...Nxc3 to create a discovered attack on the White Queen (by the Bishop on b7), as well as an attack on the Rook on a4 by the Knight on c3.
Here is how I used "discovery" to win a Knight in one of my own games a while back.



In this game, I had the Black pieces and it is my move. I sacrificed my Queen with 1…Qxg6! When my opponent captured my Queen with 2.Qxg6, the discovered check came by the way of 2…Bd4+ and on the following move, I captured my opponent's Queen (with my Rook of g8), gaining a piece in the combination.
Discovered checks can even create something amazing called the "**windmill**".

The following position demonstrates what windmill is in chess.
At the first view, it clearly seems that White has a winning material advantage. However…surprise!!!
Here is how Black can capture 6 White pieces without White having any say about it!



1…Rxg2+ 2.Kh1 Rxd2+ (discovered check) **3.Kg1 Rg2+** (again forcing the White King back to the corner) **4.Kh1 Rxc2+** (another discovered check) **5.Kg1 Rg2+ 6.Kh1 Rxb2+** (and yet another

discovered check) **7.Kg1 Rg2+** (One final time) **8.Kh1** and **8... Rxa2+ 9.Kg1 Rxa5** and now Black is a Rook ahead!

Lesson 6 - Test

1-6. It is White to move in all of the next six positions. The task is to gain material by using discovery.

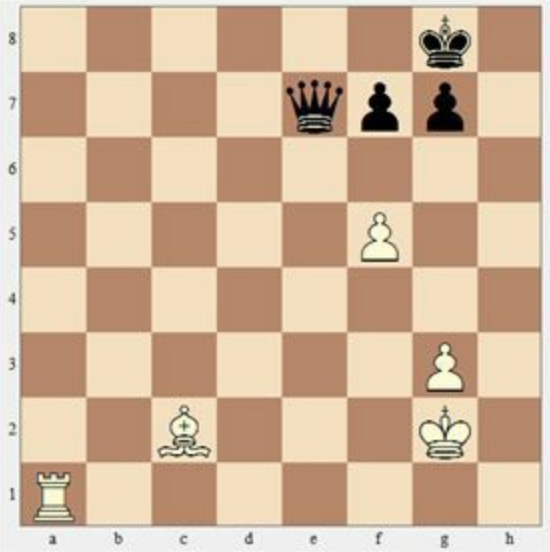
1.

2.

3.

4.

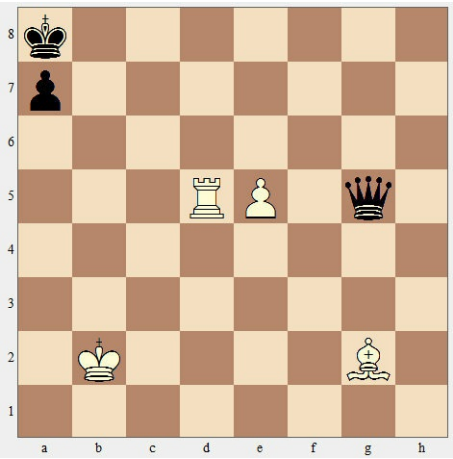
5.



6.

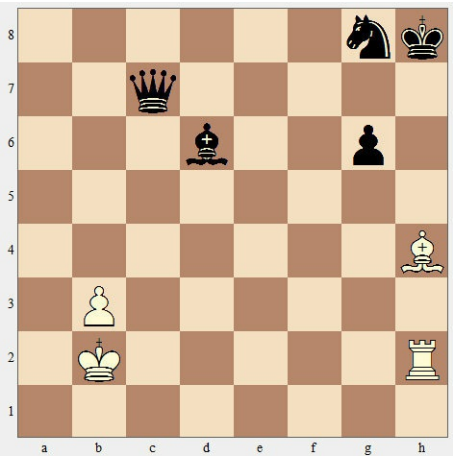
Lesson 7: DOUBLE CHECKS

While Discovery is an extremely powerful tactical tool, there is one even more deadly version of it when it involves **double checks**. This is a "killer" pattern as there is no way to block it or to capture either piece which checks the King. In many cases, even the King has no way out. This means it is checkmate.



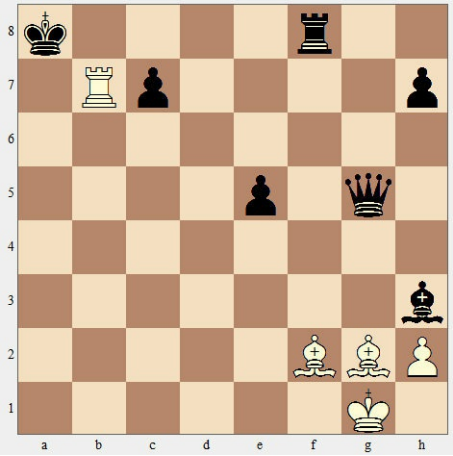
In the position above, White can checkmate in just one move by playing 1.Rd8. Even though both the White Bishop on g2 as well as the Rd8 are attacked by the Black Queen, neither can be captured as the Black King would remain "in a check".

Here is another example of the same motif:



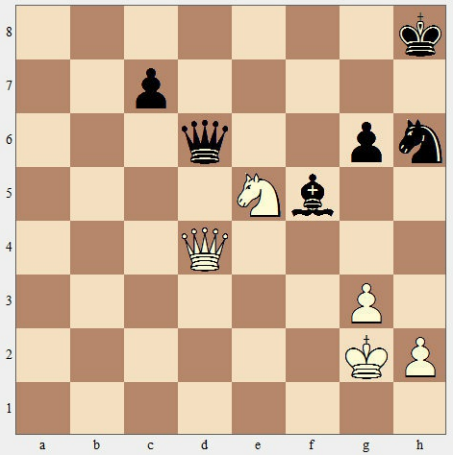
Black seems to have an overwhelming advantage. Amazingly, it does not help as White checkmates first with ***1.Bf6.***

Let's see some examples when it takes two moves to achieve checkmate using the double check.



Black is threatening to checkmate by ***Qxg2.*** But it is White's move. Here is the solution: ***1.Ra7+ Kb8*** and ***2.Ra8*** checkmate.

In some other situations, double checks are being used to gain material advantage. Here are a few of such examples:

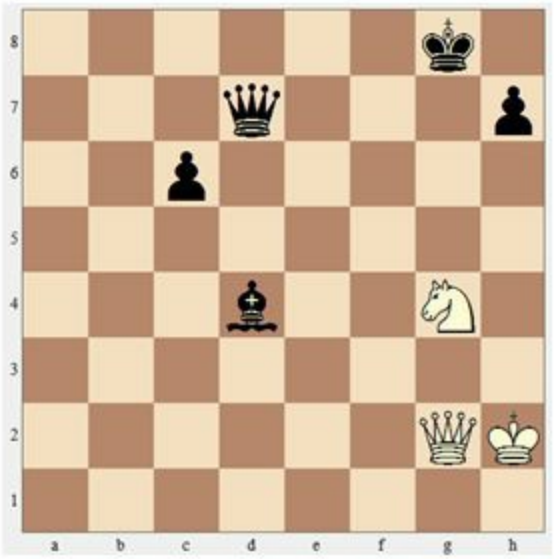


White wins the Black Queen after the double check with 1.Nf7+.

Lesson 7 – Test

1-6. It is White to move in all of the next six positions. How can White either checkmate Black or win significant material?

1.



2.

3.

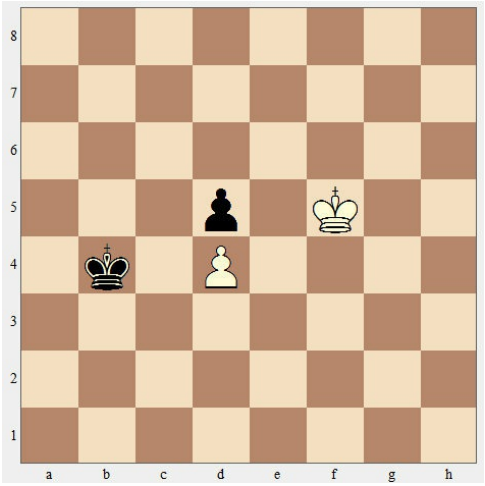
4.

5.

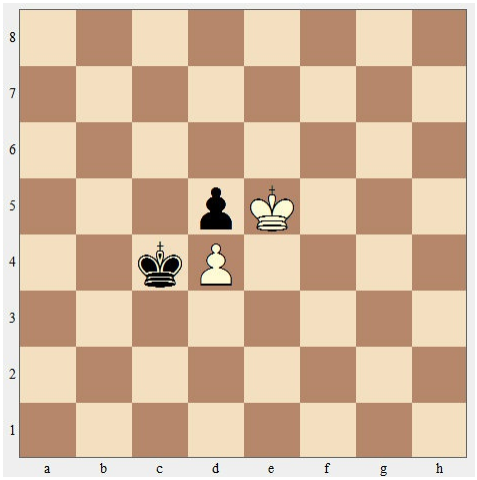
6.

Lesson 8: BASIC PAWN ENDGAME

In this lesson, you will learn more cool Pawn endgame tricks.



In order to understand the above position, let's first look at the one below.



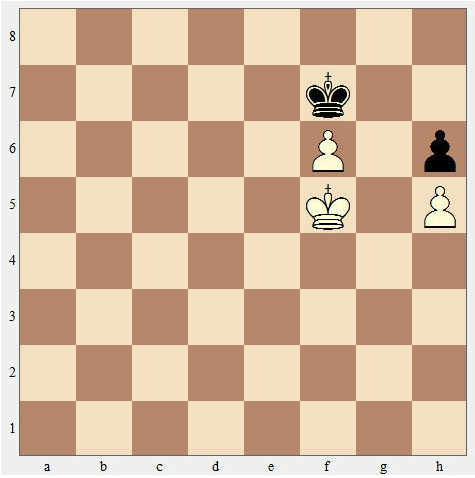
This is a magical position where the side that is to move loses! In other words, it is a **"mutual zugzwang"** position!

If it is White to move, the King needs to move from e5 and therefore allow the Black King the capture White's last Pawn. Black would be in similar trouble if it is his / her turn. The King needs to move and lose the Pawn on d5.

Now, let's go back to the previous example (the first position of the chapter). After seeing the last position, it becomes clear why 1.Ke5 here would be a major mistake. It would allow 1...Kc4, and then we reach the previous position with White to move, which means Black wins.

The only correct move which leads to White's win is 1.Ke6! And only after Black protects the d5 Pawn with 1...Kc4, then 2.Ke5 putting Black in zugzwang!

Here is another interesting Pawn endgame.



If in this position it was Black's turn to move, the win for White would come easily. After Black moves back to the eighth rank, White simple enters on g6 and wins a second Pawn on h6.

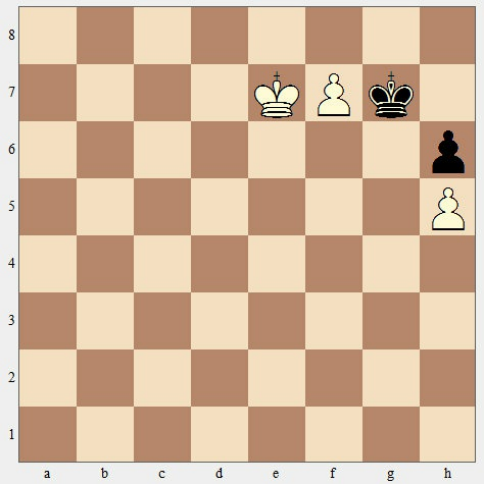
However, how White still win being the side to move?

After the simple 1.Ke5, Black will reply with 1...Kf8 (just as if the Pawns on the "h" file wouldn't be there. Then after 2.Ke6, Ke8 3.f7+ Kf8 4.Kf6 ends the game in stalemate.

So, the problem is how the reach the same position as at the start, but with Black to move. The solution is the White King needs to "**triangulate**". This is how it is being done. **1.Ke5 Kf8 2.Kf4 Ke8** (if

2...Kf7, then it is mission accomplished after 3.Kf5 and it is Black to move) **3.Ke4 Kf8 4.Ke5**. Now Black is in trouble.

As we already know, if 4...Kf7 then 5.Kf5 or if **4...Ke8**, then **5.Ke6 Kf8 6.f7** and Black is losing after **6...Kg7 7.Ke7**.



Black can try one last trick here with **7...Kh7**. Then White has to pay attention to not to promote the Pawn to Queen yet as that would end the game in stalemate. However, **8.Kf6** for example secures an easy win for White.

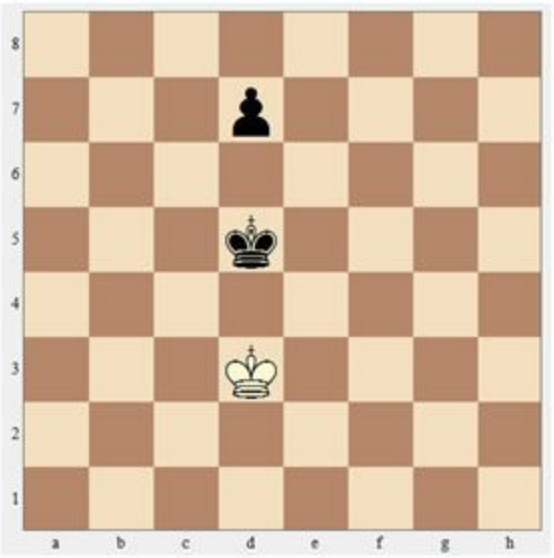
Lesson 8 - Test

1-4. It is Black to move in all of the next four positions. Circle the correct evaluation of each position. Also show a sample variation why.

1.

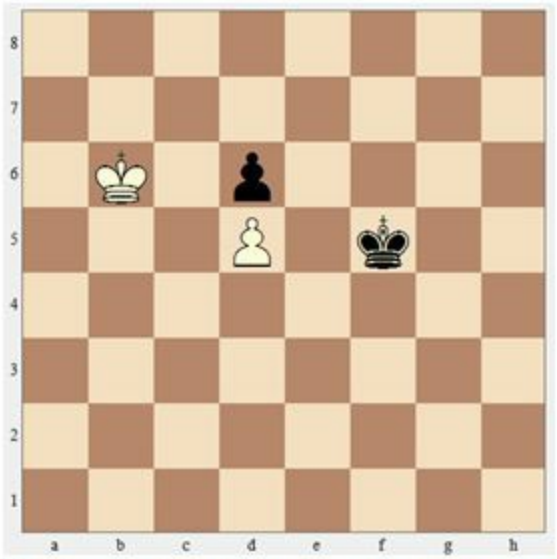
White wins/Black wins/Draw

2.



White wins/Black wins/Draw

3.



White wins/Black wins/Draw

4.

White wins/Black wins/Draw

Lesson 9: ELIMINATION AND DEFLECTION

In this lesson, we shall learn about other tactical tools: **Elimination** of a defensive piece and **Deflection**.

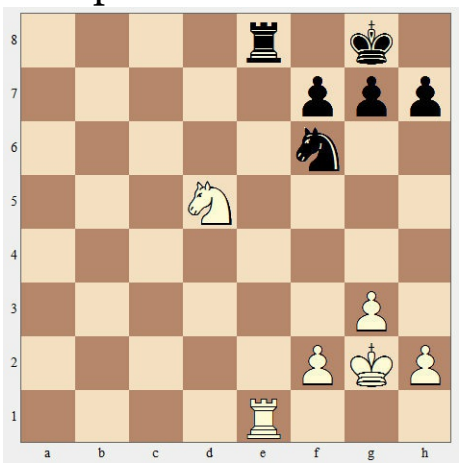
In order to come to the solution of most problems, you will need to have the following order of thoughts:

a) Recognize your target (which may be where you want to checkmate the opponent's King or which piece you want to win?)

b) Find your opponent's defending piece(s) which stop(s) your plan

c) Then look for a way to eliminate the "defender(s)"

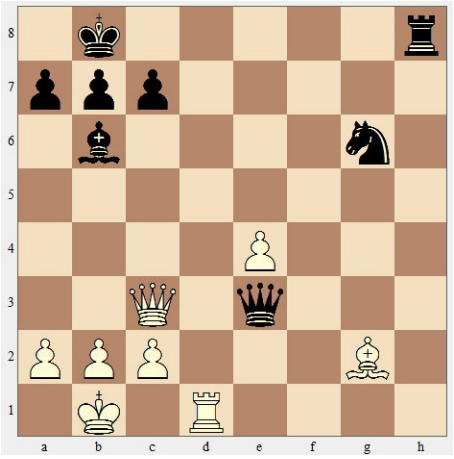
Here are a few simple examples:



At this moment, the Black Rook is defended by the Knight on f6. Therefore, the direct 1.Rxe8+ would be only a simple exchange of the Rooks after 1...Nxe8.

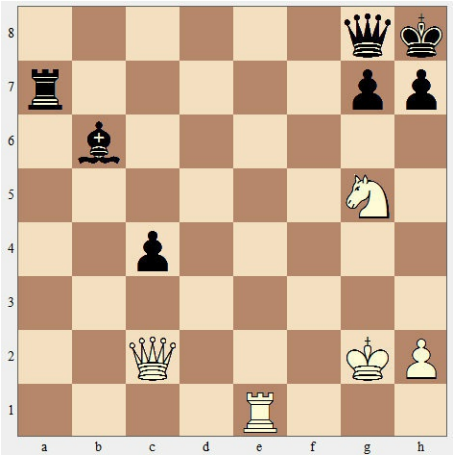
However, if White first gets rid of the defender of the Rook (the Knight on f6) with 1.Nxf6+ first, then 1...gxf6 2.Rxe8+ gives White an extra Rook.
In some cases, it is worth to even sacrifice a Queen to eliminate the defender, especially it that piece is guarding against a checkmate as in

the position below.



Here, White captures Black's Rook on h8 with 1.Qxh8+ and after 1... Nxh8, Black no longer has defense of the d8 square. Therefore, 2.Rd8 checkmates.

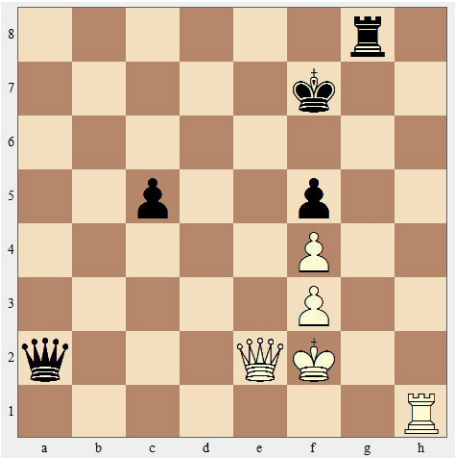
Let's see now some more delicate examples.



We can see that White has a nice setup with the Knight on g5 and the Queen on c2, aiming at the h7 Pawn. If it wasn't for the Black King defending it, White would be ready to checkmate with Qxh7.

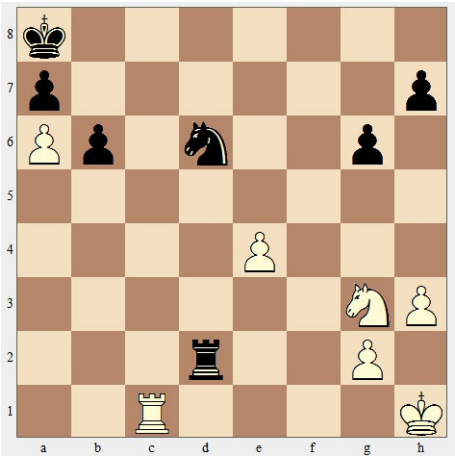
So therefore the answer is ***1.Re8!*** to "pull away" the Black Queen from defending the h7 square.

In the next diagram, we see a very well known tactic, one that is very often used in practical games.



Black by first sacrificing a Rook with 1...Rg2+! wins the White Queen in the following move.

In the next position, the defender is the Black Knight on d6.



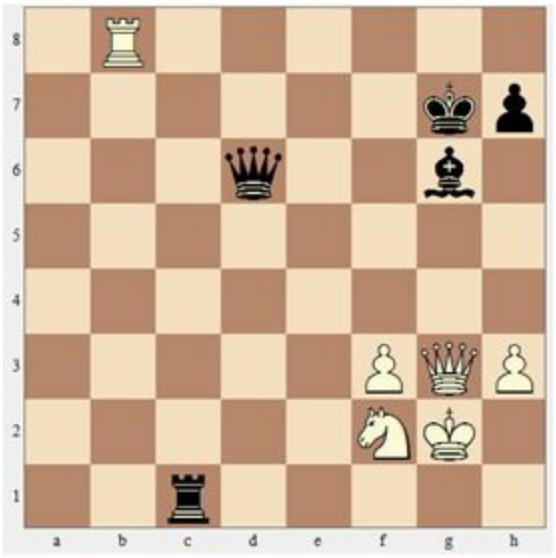
The solution is simple. Just attack it with 1.e5.

Lesson 9 – Test

1-6. It is Black to move in all of the next six positions. How can Black either checkmate White or win significant material?

1.

2.



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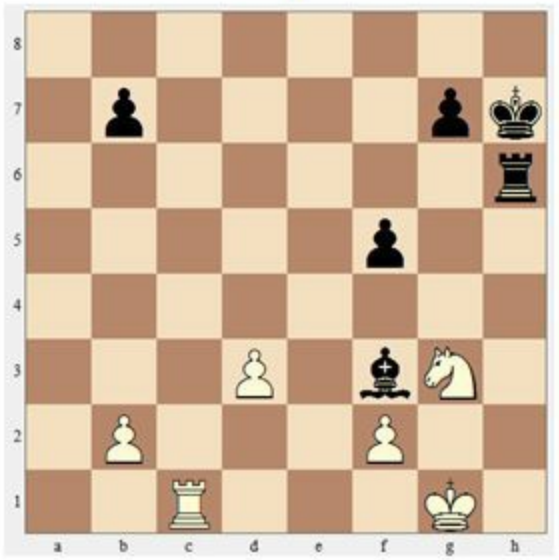
4.

5.

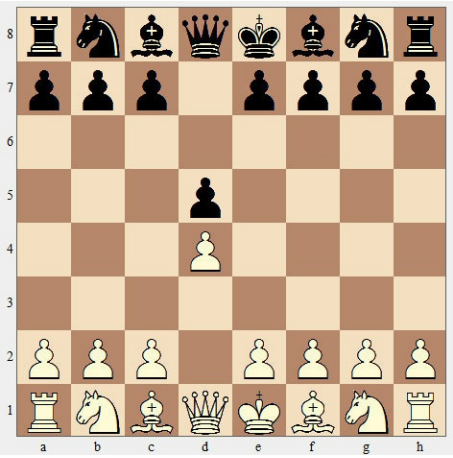
6.



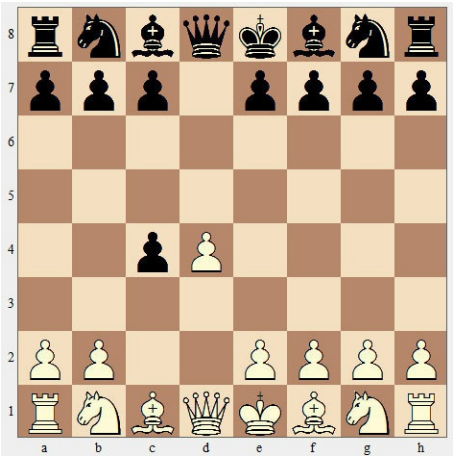
Lesson 10: QUEEN'S GAMBIT OPENING

When White starts a game with **1.d4**, one of the most common responses is **1...d5**, just as after 1.e4, 1...e5.

Let's see how the Queens Gambit typically develops after those starting moves.



Here White usually plays **2.c4**. This is the Queen's Gambit, which Black can either accept by capturing White's Pawn on c4 or decline by playing 2...e6. Alternatively, Black can also choose to play 2...c6 which is called the *Slav defense*. Both 2...e6 and 2...c6 have the similar idea to be able to recapture after cxd5 with a Pawn to keep better control of the center.
2.Nf3 is a also good choice. Other moves are inferior.



After Black captures with ***2…dxc4***, we have reached the "**Queen's Gambit Accepted**" (QGA).

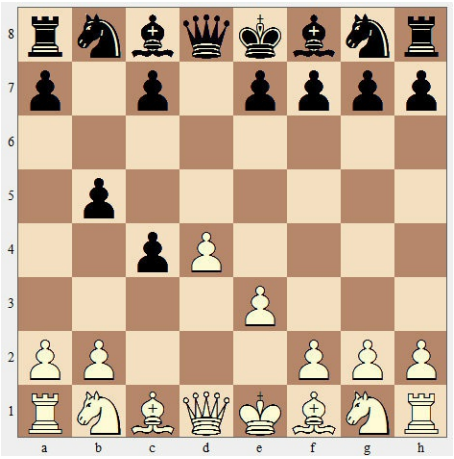
Black's Pawn advantage is short lived as White has various ways to win the Pawn back.

While White could try immediately 3.Qa4+ to win the Pawn back, it would be a wrong idea as after 3…Nc6 4.Qxc4 Qxd4, Black would still maintain the extra Pawn.

A better approach is **3.e3** which opens the diagonal for White's light squared Bishop on f1, and now attacks the Pawn on c4.

Here, many master games continue with **3…Nf6 4.Bxc4 e6 5.Nf3 c5 6.0-0.** And now Black plays **6…a6** to prepare the Pawn advance from b7 to b5 to develop the Bishop from c8 to b7.

But why not to protect the Pawn on c4 by playing **3…b5** instead of ***3… Nf6***?



White will gain some advantages with the following move ***4.a4***.
Now here is Black's problem:

a) If Black plays ***4...a6*** to protect the Pawn on b5, White simply captures with ***5.axb5***, and Black cannot recapture as then the Rook on a8 will be lost.

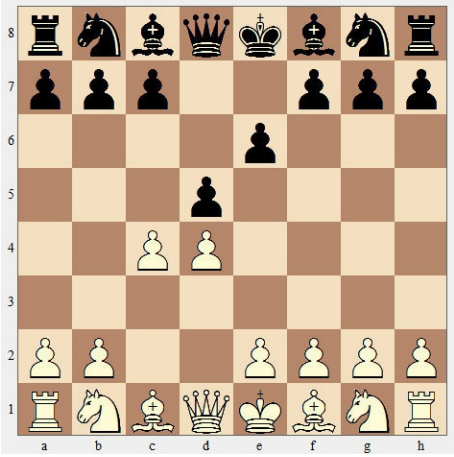
b) If Black defends the (b5) Pawn with ***4...c6***, then White trades on b5 with ***5.axb5 cxb5*** and now traps the Black Rook in the corner by ***6.Qf3!***

c) If Black advances the pawn with **4...b4**, then White can simply win the Pawn back with **5.Bxc4.**

d) If Black plays ***4...bxa4***, both Black Pawns on a4 and c4 will be lost soon, leaving White with a better developed position. White could start with ***5.Qf3*** and after ***5...c6 6.Bxc4.***

e) If Black tries to protect the Pawn on b5 at all costs with ***4...Bd7***, it will not work either as the following variation shows ***5.axb5 Bxb5 6.Na3 Qd5 7.Nxb5 Qxb5*** and **8.Qc2** winning the Pawn back anyway.

Now let's see how the game continues in the **Queen's Gambit Declined** (QGD) after **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6**.

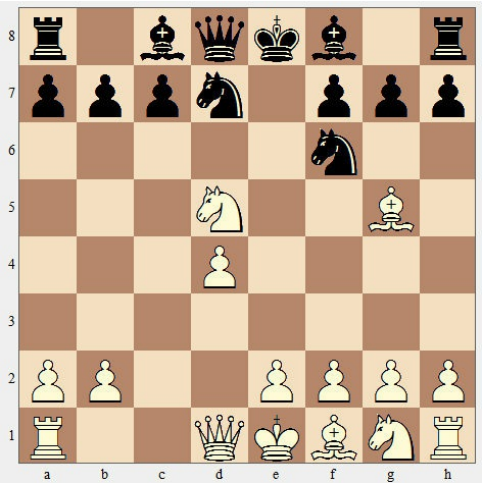


3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 White pins the Black Knight on f6.

4...Be7 A smart developing move which on one hand clears the f8 square so Black is ready to castle and on the hand also releases the Knight on f6 from the pin.

However, 4...Nbd7 is also playable. In fact, it would set up a trap.

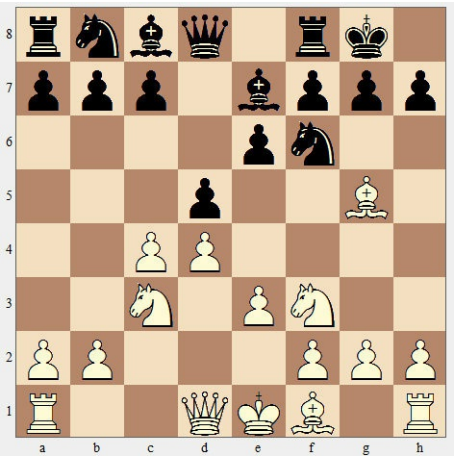
If then White tries to win a Pawn by using the pin over the Knight on f6 with 5.cxd5 exd5 and then 6.Nxd5, that would be falling into Black's trap.



Shockingly, Black can (and should) capture White's Knight with 6... Nxd5 and allow 7.Bxd8 giving up on the Queen because then after 7...

Bb4+ Black comes out ahead.

After 4...Be7, White typically continues to develop with **5.e3** (or 5.Nf3 first) and then when Black castles **5...0-0 6.Nf3**. Black now has two different ways to go.



One is to develop with b7-b6, followed by Bb7 (usually first playing 6...h6 7.Bh4), and the other being 6...Nbd7, followed by c6.

The Queen's Gambit Decline is generally considered a very safe and solid opening where Black gets equal chances if played properly.

Lesson 10 – Test

1. Are the starting moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 called Queen's Gambit Accepted or Queen's Gambit Declined?

2. Is the Queen's Gambit Declined considered a safe or a risky type of opening choice?

3. Can White win a Pawn on d5 after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7?

4. What should be White's 4th move if Black tries to hang on to the Pawn on c4 after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 b5?

Lesson 11: KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE

In the previous lesson, you have learned about a solid opening against 1.d4, the Queen's Gambit. In this lesson, you will learn about the King's Indian defense, which is a sharper and riskier opening approach.

It starts with the following moves:

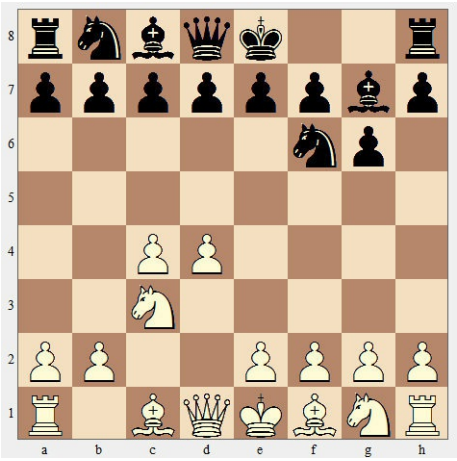
1.d4 Nf6

This developing move control the d5 and e4 center squares.

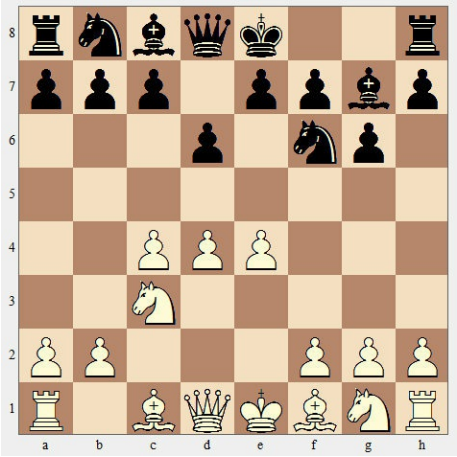
2.c4 g6

This is a very different approach than in the Queen's Gambit where Black immediately occupies the d5 center square with a Pawn. In the King's Indian, Black aims to attack the center from the side with the Bishop developing to g7, which is also called as the "fianchetto" development.

3.Nc3 Bg7



In this position, White most often continues with **4.e4** and then Black either castles or more often plays **4...d6** first.



At this point, White has various good plans to choose from.

However, playing right aggressively away with ***5.e5*** would certainly be a mistake. Black then would capture ***5...dxe5***. After ***6.dxe5***, the Queens will be traded as well with ***6...Qxd1+ 7.Kxd1*** and ***7...Ng4*** with a double attack on the e5 and f2 Pawns. As the end result, after ***5.e5*** Black wins a Pawn by force.

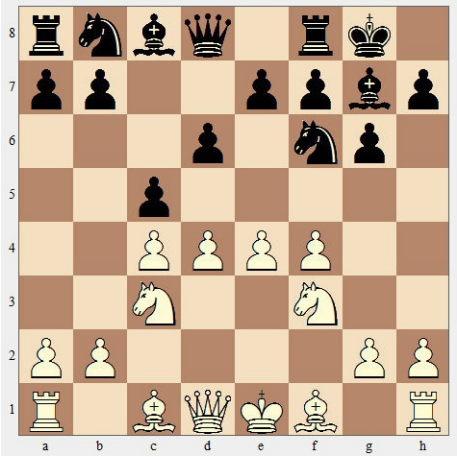
The following are some of the most popular moves after ***4...d6***:

5.f4, 5.f3, 5.Nf3, 5.Be2.

5.f4 is called the Four Pawn Attack. It is very appropriately named as White has a nice line of Pawns c4 through f4 along the fourth rank. 5.f4 is the most ambitious of all of the above mentioned choices.

The drawback of White's aggressive early play with the Pawns is that the development of White pieces (other than the Pawns) is neglected.

Black should continue as a response with **5...0-0** and after **6.Nf3 c5** to attack White's center quickly.



Here, White has two main options to choose from. White can either try to keep the center closed with 7.d5. Black should play 7...e6 to open files as soon as possible to get active play.

The other option is to capture **7.dxc5**. Here comes an important idea worth remembering. Now, Black's best move is not to recapture with 7...dxc5, but to play **7...Qa5!** The point is that after 8.cxd6, Black can use the pin on the Knight on c3 and play 8...Nxe4 9.dxe7 Re8. Black has a very strong position due to the pressure on the Knight on c3 and better development.

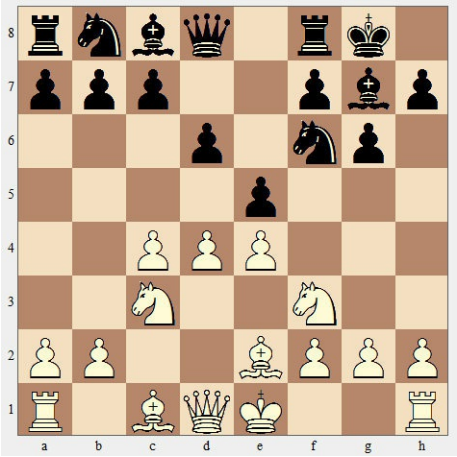
After ***7...Qa5*** most master games continue with ***8.Bd3 Qxc5 9.Qe2*** (to prepare the development of the Bishop from c1 to e3) ***9...Nc6 10.Be3 Qa5 11.0-0 Bg4***. Both sides completed development and have about equal chances going into the middlegame.

Let's move on to another option that White has on the fifth move: **5.f3** which is the beginning of the Samisch variation.

This move gives White nice support to the center Pawn on e4, in addition to preventing ideas that otherwise Black could have.
For example, if White would have played ***5.Be3*** right away, then Black could have answered it with ***5...Ng4***.

After ***5.f3***, Black usually continues with **5...0-0** and then plays with one of two game plans soon after ***either e7-e5 or c7-c5.***

5.Be2 often leads to the similar positions as 5.Nf3. After either continuation, Black should castle **5...0-0 6.Nf3** and here **6...e5.**



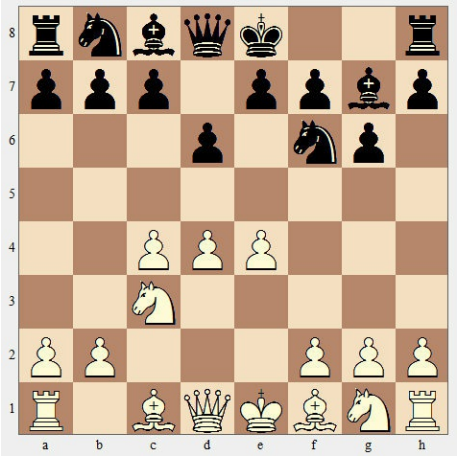
After the other move order ***5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5***, we would reach the same exact position (see above) as well.

This is an important crossroad where White has several choices.

First of all, it is important to know that White cannot win a Pawn with ***7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 and 9.Nxe5***. Black would then play ***9... Nxe4***! with a discovered attack (on the Knight on e5). After ***10.Nxe4 Bxe5***, Black wins the Pawn back with a better position. ***10.Nxf7***? would be over ambitious and not sound as after ***10...Bxc3***+ White would end up losing a piece.

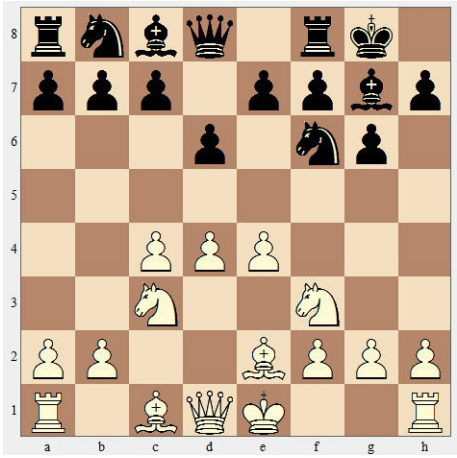
White's best options are: ***7.0-0, 7.d5 or 7.Be3***.

You now know some basic openings. It is enough for you to start playing a decent chess game. At this point, it is much more important to master tactics, strategy, and endgames before getting deeper into the world of chess openings.



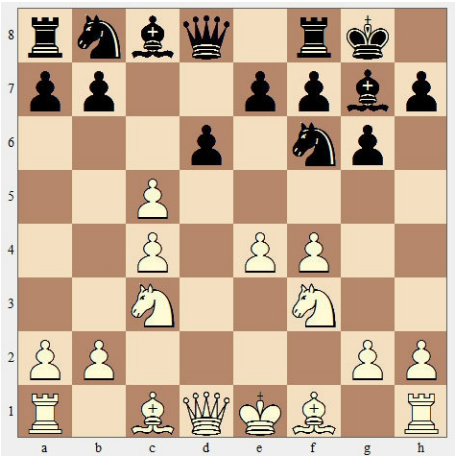
Lesson 11 – Test

1. In the position below, would ***5.e5*** be a good idea?



2. In the position, below would 6…e5 lose a Pawn?

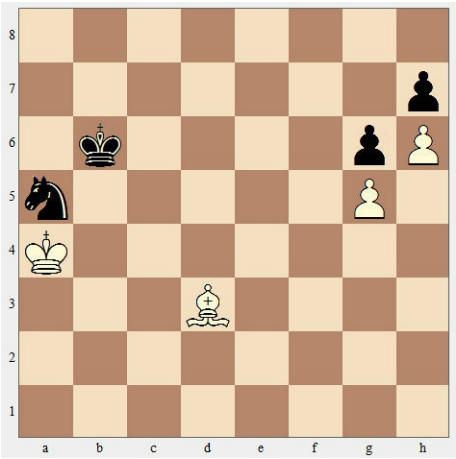
3. Which is generally a sharper opening the Queen's Gambit or the King's Indian defense?



4. What is Black's surprising key move in the following position?

Lesson 12: PASSED PAWNS

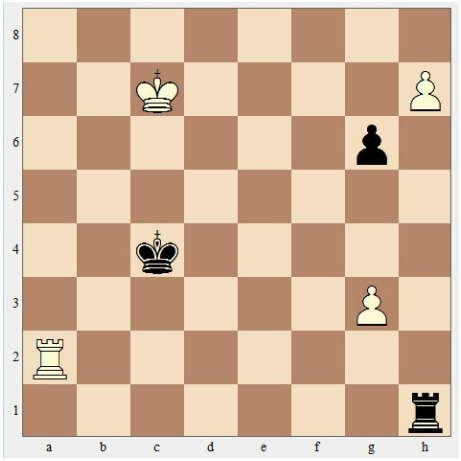
In this lesson, you will learn about tricky ways to promote your Pawn or how to hold off the promotion of your opponent's far advanced passed Pawn.



In the position above, in order for White to create a passed Pawn, at least one of the Black Pawns will need to be eliminated.
The attempt to try to get the Bishop to g8 (to attack the Pawn on h7) is too slow: ***1.Be4 Nb7 2.Bd5 Nc5***+ (Now White needs to waste a move to get out of check) ***3.Kb4 Nd7 4.Bg8*** and the Knight arrives right in time to f8 to protect the Pawn on h7.

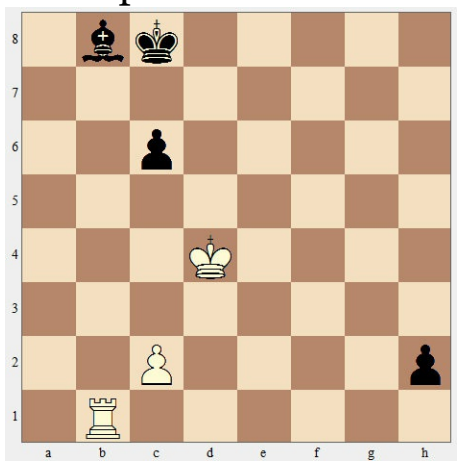
However, White can accomplish the goal with a nice little combination: ***1.Bxg6***. Then if 1...hxg6 the path of the "h" Pawn is clear and after ***2.h7*** Black cannot prevent the promotion.

In the next example, White's Pawn is just one rank away from promotion. However, Black's Rook seems to be all ready to stop it.



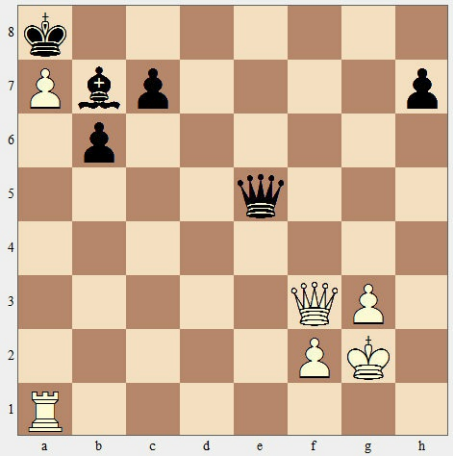
Nevertheless, White has a creative way to cut off the defense by the Black Rook. The solution is ***1.Ra4+,*** and then, regardless where the Black King moves to get out of the check, White will play ***2.Rh4*** and the ***Pawn on h7 becomes unstoppable.***

Here is another similar example:



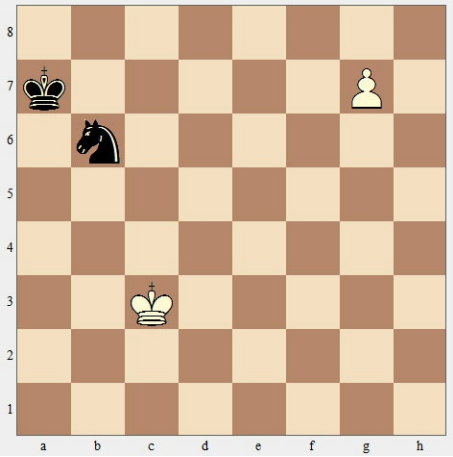
It is Black's turn to move. The White Rook seems to be comfortably guarding the h1 promotion square.

The problem is that Black's Bishop will get to g1 before White's Rook would get to h1**.** ***1...Ba7+,*** followed by ***2...Bg1 cutting the Rook off from the h1 square.***
The next one is a really pretty one.

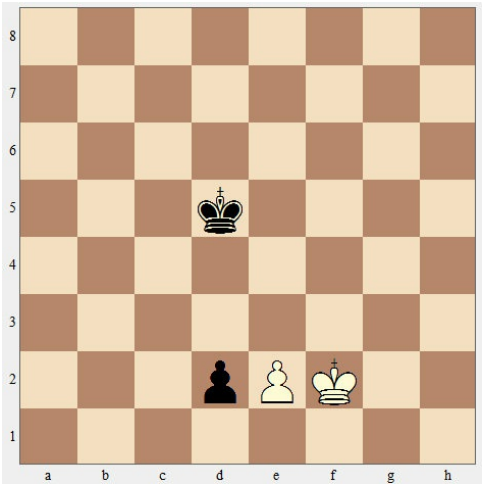


At the first glance, White seems to be in trouble as the Queen (on f3) is pinned. However, after the brilliant Queen sacrifice ***1.Qxb7+ Kxb7***, not only that White promotes its "a" Pawn, but does so with ***2.a8(Q) checkmate!***

Now let's see a couple of examples on how to hold off the "unstoppable" looking Pawn.



The Black Knight seems really far from the key g8 promotion square. Yet, if it is Black to move, Black will catch the Pawn right in time with ***1...Nd5***+ and after the King moves, either ***2...Ne7*** or ***2...Nf6*** does the job.



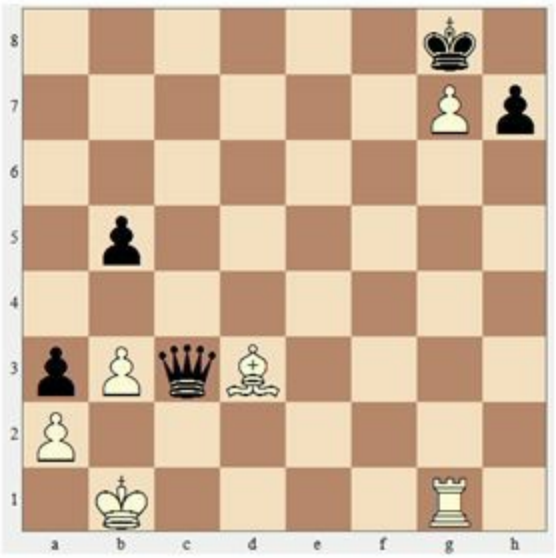
Here, the solution is ***1.e4***+ followed by ***2.Ke2.***

Lesson 12 – Test

1-4. Find the winning move that enables the White Pawn to promote soon or wins significant material.

1.

2.



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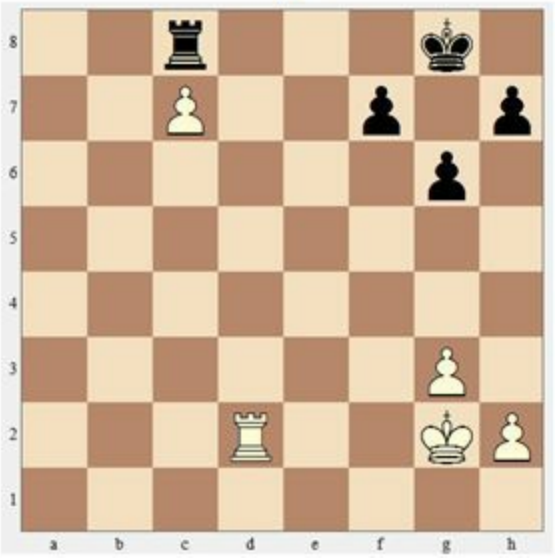

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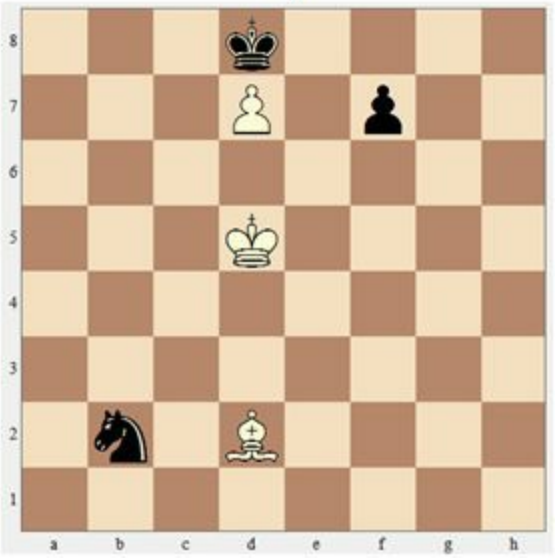
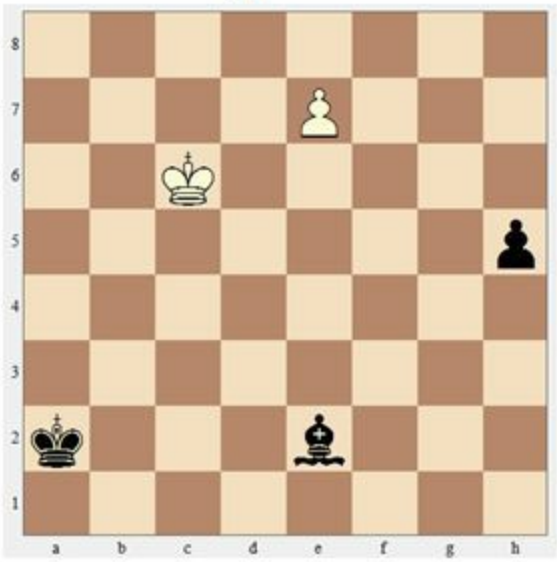


5-6. How can Black “catch” the White passed Pawn or capture it soon after it promotes?

5.



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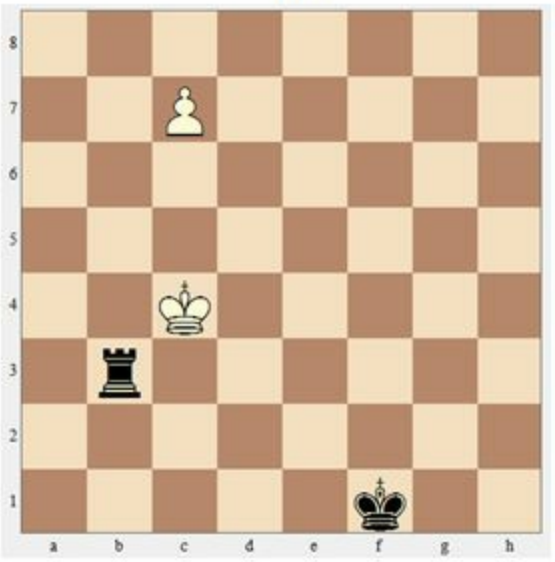
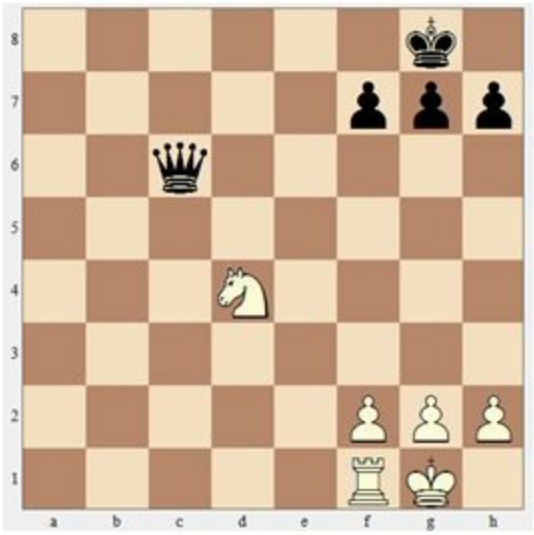


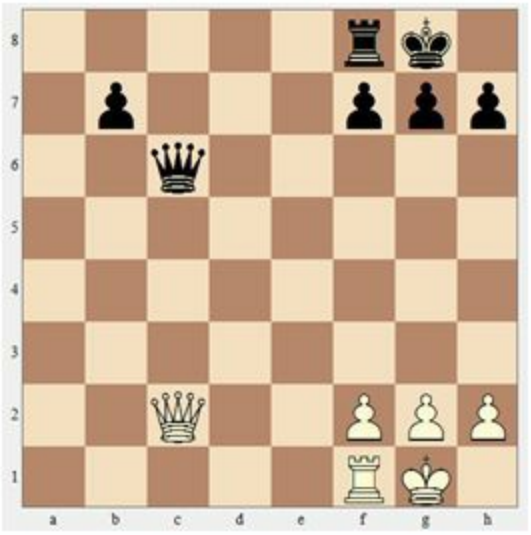
Lesson 13: INTERMEDIATE MOVES

In this lesson, you will learn about an important tool that even good players forget about from time to time. They are the **intermediate** or so called **in-between moves**.

Generally when your opponent attacks one of your valuable pieces, you have to protect it or move it out of danger. When your opponent captures one of your pieces, usually you would recapture if you can, like in the examples below.

Intermediate moves are often checks, but sometimes they are captures or simply attack on another piece, before continuing on with the natural move.

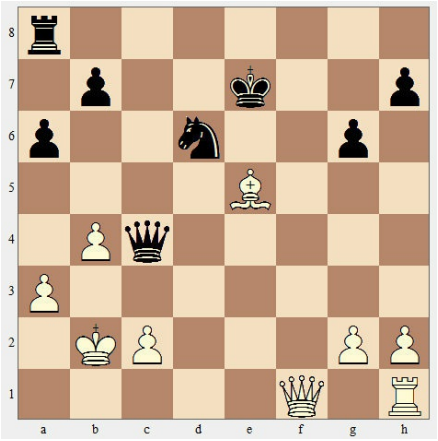




In the first of the two positions, the Black Queen is under attacked. Therefore, it has to move to one of the safe squares, for example to d5 or c5.

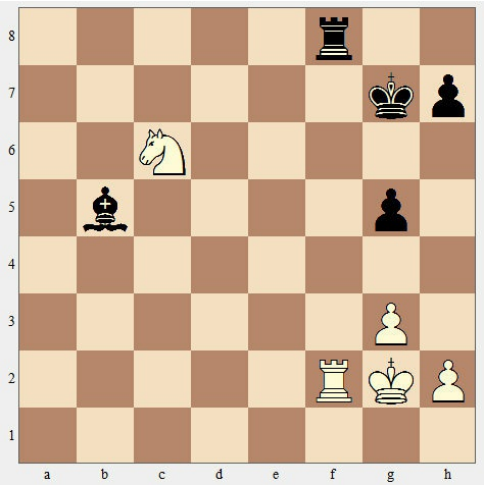
In the second example, if White plays 1.Qxc6, it is obvious that Black would recapture with 1...bxc6 to keep the material balance.

However, there are other situations when you can do better than playing the natural response. Let's see some examples of it.



In the diagram above, Black can capture the White Queen with ***1... Qxf1***.
After that the natural response would be to recapture with ***2.Rxf1***. However, that would be a big mistake as it allows the fork with ***2... Nc4***+ and Black wins a Bishop (on e5).

The correct intermediate move is ***2.Bxd6***+ first and only after ***2... Kxd6***, ***3.Rxf1*** and White does not lose any material on the deal.



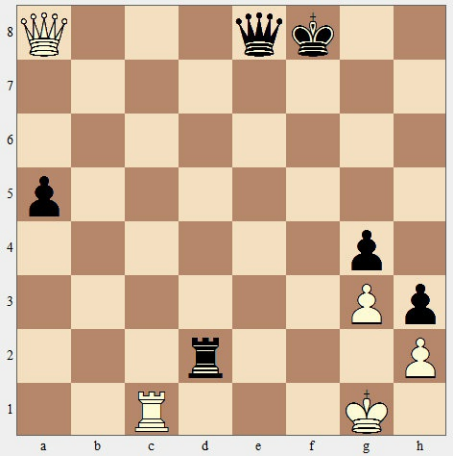
In the position above, the White Knight is under attack by Black's Bishop. White could and should move the Knight, for example to d4. But, why not to trade Rooks first (on f8), and then move the Knight?

1.Rxf8 first would be a major and costly mistake for White. Black would not recapture right away, but would first capture the Knight

with ***1...Bxc6***+.

Then if White moves the King out of the check, then Black simply plays ***1...Kxf8*** leaving Black with an extra Bishop. ***2.Rf3*** doesn't save the game either as after ***2...g4*** Black is in a winning position.

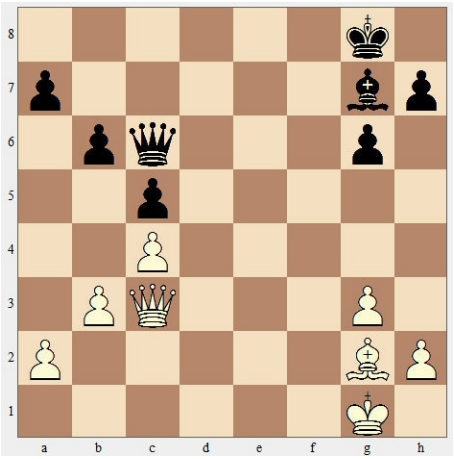
In the next example, the White Queen is hanging on a8.



If White simply moves the Queen away and captures the Pawn on a5, then Black forces checkmate in just three moves with *1...Qe3+ 2.Kh1 Qf3+ 3.Kg1 and Qg2 checkmate.*

Therefore, White needs to look for other better options. Despite the fact that the White Queen is under attack, White is best off moving a different piece, the Rook.

1.Rc8 looks like a real good move as it also pins and attacks the Black Queen. However, that would give Black the opportunity to escape by perpetual checks with *1...Rd1+ 2.Kf2 Rd2+* and so on.
The correct move is ***1.Rf1+*** and if ***1...Ke7 2.Re1+*** winning the Black Queen.



And let's a final example on this theme.

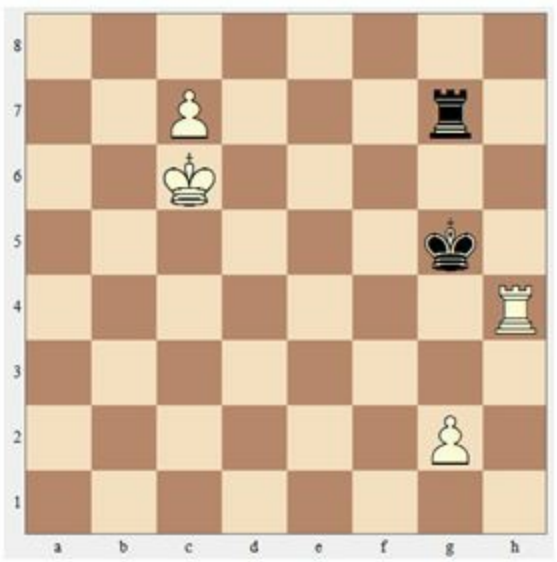
The this position is completely symmetrical! Black is counting on answering 1.*Bxc6* with *1…Bxc3* and hopes that everything is fine.

But White has a better option with a nice little "in-between move" first. ***1.Qxg7+!*** and only after ***1…Kxg7 2. Bxc6*** and White wins a Bishop.

Lesson 13 – Test

1-6. Find the best move for Black using the above learned tool.

1.



2.

3.

4.

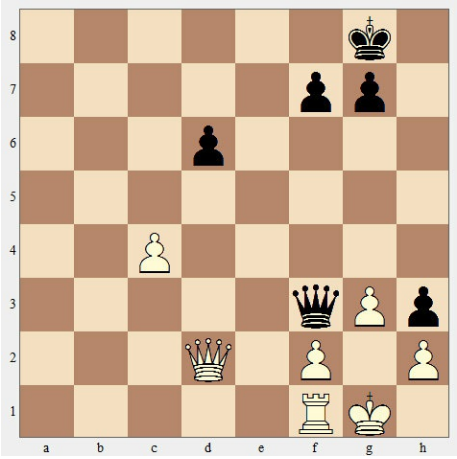
5.

6.

Lesson 14: DEFENSE

In chess, most of us would prefer to be on the attacking side. However, there will be times when we have no choice and need to be on the defense. Just because you may need to make a few defensive moves, it does not mean that your position is bad. It is just a part of the game.

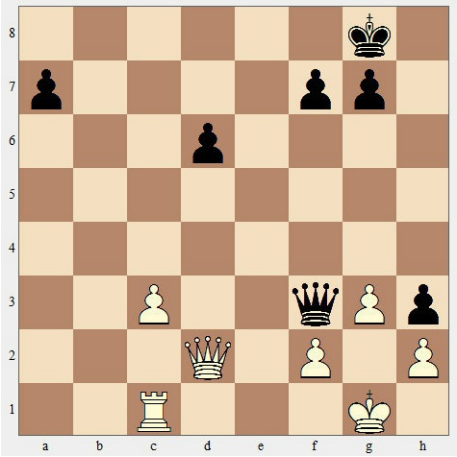
In this lesson you will learn about defending moves.



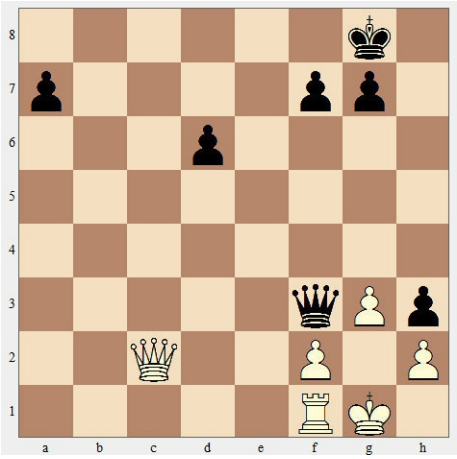
In the position above, Black is threatening to checkmate with *Qg2*. White can simply defend by playing ***1.Qd5***, and be ready to meet *1...Qg2+* with *2.Qxg2*.

In other words, White directly protects the g2 square and solves all problems.

Let's see some other situations when that simple approach is not available.



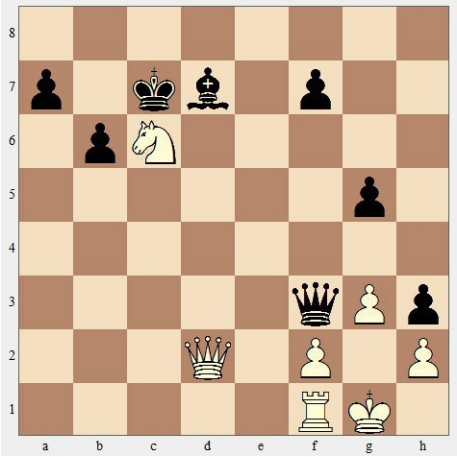
In this example, the only way to save the game is to have the King run away from the danger with ***1.Kf1***.



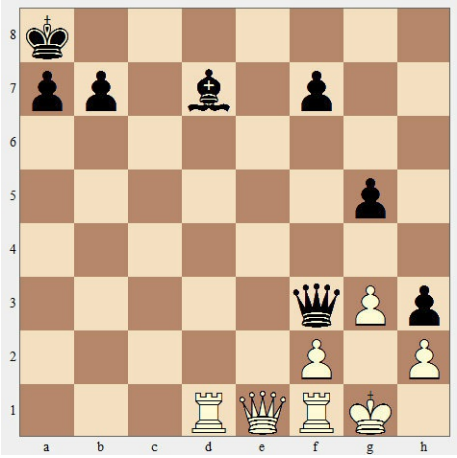
In this position, neither of the two saving methods seen in the previous examples is available. White needs to look for a different method. In this case, White needs to eliminate one of the two key Black pieces which creates the checkmate threat on g2. That means either the Queen (on f3) or the Pawn from h3.

The solution is ***1.Qc8***+ followed by ***2.Qxh3***.

In the next example, White has to change the mindset from defense to counter attack! That is the only way to avoid losing.



The saving (and winning) combination is ***1.Qxd7+ Kxd7 2.Ne5*** fork.



In the diagram above, White needs to completely forget about defense and look for a way to take advantage of Black's weak back rank.

White to move and checkmate in two: ***1.Qe8+ Bxe8 2.Rd8*** checkmate.

Lesson 14 – Test

1-6. It is Black to move in all six positions. Find the best way to defend or counter attack.

1.

2.

3.

4.

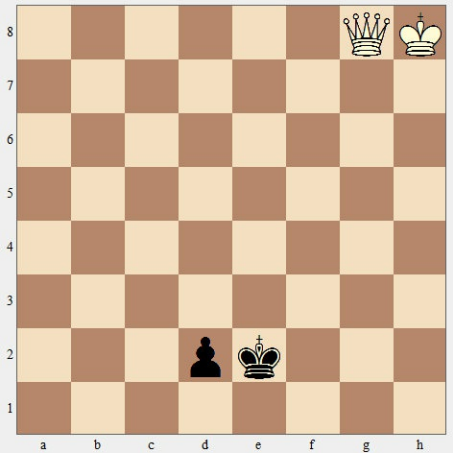
5.

6.

Lesson 15: QUEEN VS PAWN

In this lesson, you will learn about important Queen against Pawn endgames. Normally, such a huge material advantage guarantees an easy win for the side that has the Queen. However, in some cases when the weaker side's Pawn is far advanced (only one square away from promotion) it is not easy to win, especially when the stronger side's King is far away from the Pawn.

Let's first see an example where the difficulties can be overcome.



Black is threatening to promote the Pawn. Therefore, White cannot afford to make quiet moves (one that is not check), unless the Black King moves in front of its own Pawn to d1.

In fact, that is exactly the goal that White has, to force the King to d1, so at that point the White King can start moving closer to the Black King and Pawn.

The only way White can win this endgame is if both the White King and Queen will get next to the Black Pawn to capture it.

There are various ways to accomplish this same goal. Here is one of them:

1. Qc4+ Ke1 (of course Black will not voluntarily move to d1 unless that is the only way to avoid losing the Pawn.)

2.Qe4+ Kf2

Now, we will learn about an important idea. White moves directly behind the Black Pawn and attacks it.

3.Qd3 Ke1 and **4.Qe3+**

Black has no choice but to move to d1. Otherwise, the Pawn will be lost.

4...Kd1

Now that the Pawn is not threatening to promote, White finally has the time to move to King closer to action.

5.Kg7 Kc2

5...Kc1 would be even worse as then the d2 Pawn would be pinned and White could bring the King closer right away with 6.Kf6.

Now White again needs to force the Black King back to d1.

6.Qe4+ Kc1 7.Qc4+ Kb2 8.Qd3 Kc1 9.Qc3+ Kd1

Mission accomplished. The Black King is in front of its Pawn. This means the White King can come closer again.

White will have to repeat this same method a few more times until the White King gets close enough to the Black Pawn.

10.Kf6 Ke2 11.Qc4+ (To pin with 11.Qc2 is good too.)

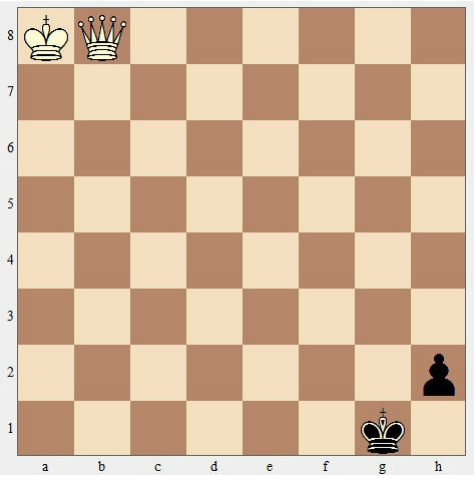
11...Ke1 12.Qe4+ Kf2 13.Qd3 Ke1 14.Qe3+ Kd1 15.Ke5 Kc2 16.Qe4 Kc1 17.Qc4+ Kb2 18.Qd3 Kc1 19.Qc3+ Kd1 20.Kd4 Ke2 21.Qe3+ Kd1 22.Kc3 and the Pawn on d2 is lost.

It seems like a long series of moves but if you understand the logic behind the method, it is actually not that difficult.

The good news is that the method is exactly the same; whether the weaker side's Pawn is on the ***b, d, e or g*** *files*.

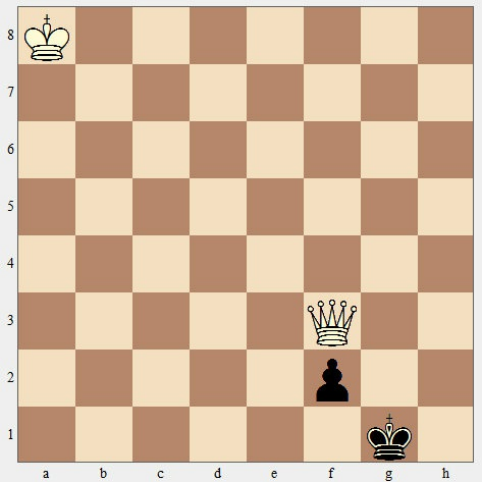
If the Pawn is on the ***"a", "c", "f" or "h"*** *files, things can get more complicated or in some cases the side with the Queen may not be able to win at all even with best play*.

Let's first see what the difficulties are when the weaker side has a Rook Pawn, which means a Pawn on the "a" or h" "file.



In this position, White cannot win. The most logical try is ***1.Qg3***+ forcing ***1...Kh1***. The problem is that even though now the Black King is on h1 in front of its own Pawn, White cannot bring the King closer as after **2.Kb7** it is ***stalemate***. Therefore, White cannot make progress.

The problem is similar also when the weaker side has a Pawn on the Bishop file, that is on the ***"c" or "f"*** file.

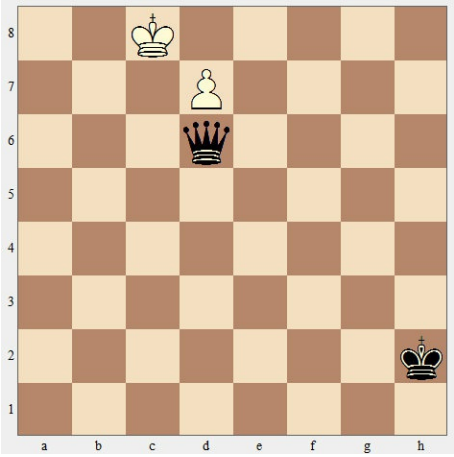


Here White's most natural try is ***1.Qg3***+ trying to force the Black King to f1.
However, Black can go instead to h1 (***1...Kh1***). Then after 2.***Qxf2***, it is ***stalemate***!

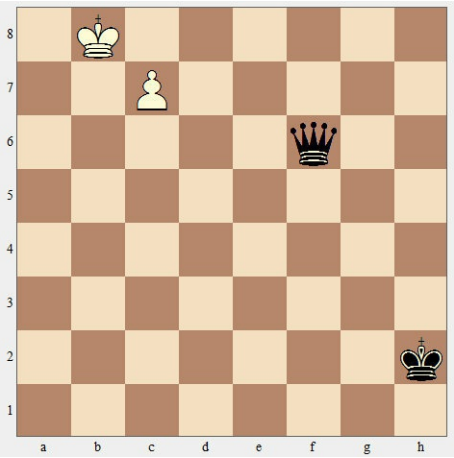
Naturally if the White King would be much closer to Black's Pawn already (depending how close), White may win in similar positions.

Lesson 15 - Test

1. Can Black win this endgame? If, yes what should be the next move?



2. Can Black win this endgame, if yes how?



3. Imagine an endgame where White has a Pawn on f7, and the King next to it on g7. Black's King is in the corner on a1, while the Black Queen is on e6. Can Black win? If yes, how?

4. In endgames as seen in this lesson, when is it time to bring the King (of the side with the Queen) closer toward the Pawn

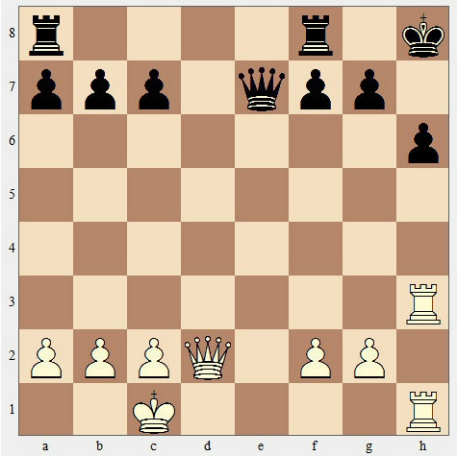
a) When the weaker side's King is in front of its Pawn or

b) When the weaker side's King is in next to its Pawn (on a neighboring file)

Lesson 16: TYPICAL ATTACKS ON THE CASTLED KING

In some of the previous lessons, you have learned about the importance to castle early in the game. Typically, having the King castled is much safer than keeping it in the middle of the board. However, even in those situations there are dangers to be alert about.

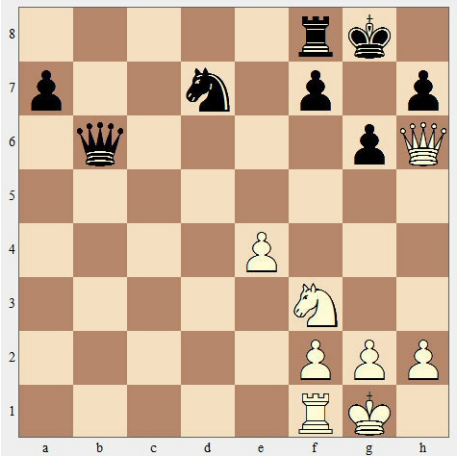
In this lesson, we will learn about how to start some typical attacks against a King which has already castled.



In the diagram above, Black is a Pawn ahead. However, we can see that White has piled up its army against the Black Pawn on h6.

White can even afford to sacrifice a piece as valuable as a Rook with ***1.Rxh6+!***

If Black does not accept the sacrifice but plays *1...Kg8*, then *2.Rh8* checkmates. If Black captures with ***1...gxh6*** then White till play ***2.Qxh6+.*** Now Black no longer has the defending Pawns on the "g" and "h" files. Therefore, the King is in trouble. After ***2...Kg8***, White can checkmate with either ***3.Qh7*** or ***3.Qh8***.



In this position, the White Queen is already clearly in an attacking position.

However, even a Queen can rarely succeed in an attack entirely on its own.

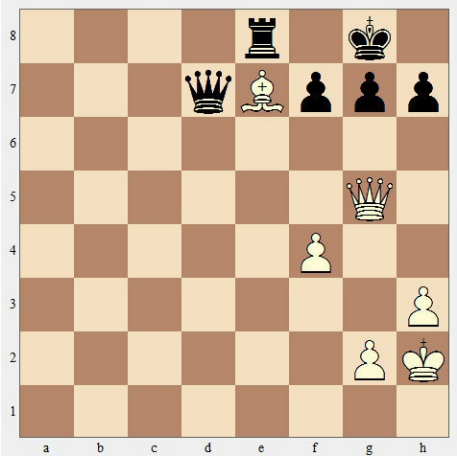
It needs help of another piece or pieces.

The correct continuation of the attack is **1.Ng5** threatening to checkmate with *2.Qxh7*.

If Black moves the Rook somewhere along the eighth rank, for example 1...Ra8, then White checkmates in just two moves with *2.Qxh7 Kf8* and *3.Qxf7*.

But what happens if Black protects the Pawn on h7 with **1...Nf6**?

Then White should look for a way to chase the "defender" away. And **2.e5** is the answer. Here Black will have to either move the Knight from f6, in which case White checkmates right away, or don't move the Knight and give it up. In either case White wins.



In the example above, Black is up an exchange. However, with correct play White can quickly develop a winning attack.

1.Bf6! White uses the pin to threaten to checkmate with 2.Qxg7.

1...g6 and now **2.Qh6** puts Black in front of unsolvable problems.

Lesson 16 – Test

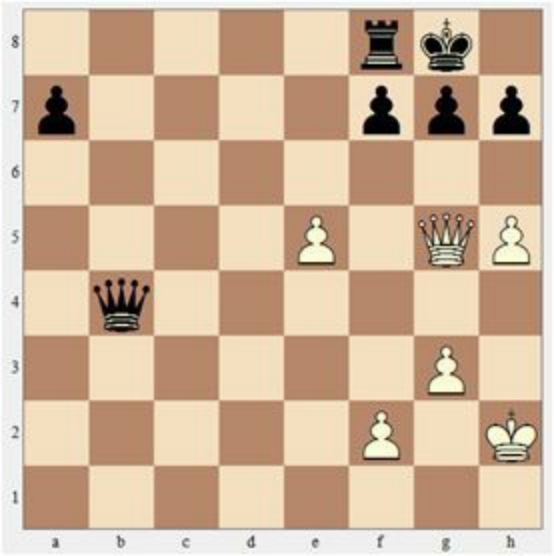
1-4. It is White to move in all four positions. How should White continue?

1.

2.

3.

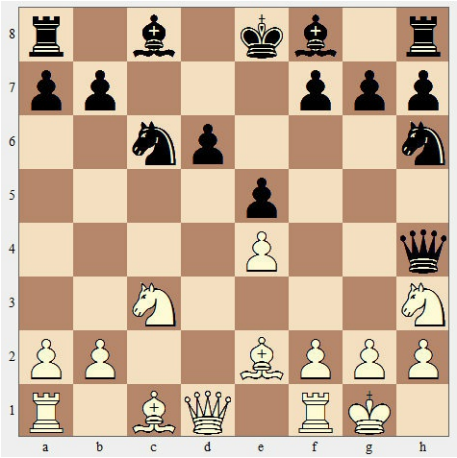
4.



Lesson 17: GAINING MATERIAL ADVANTAGE

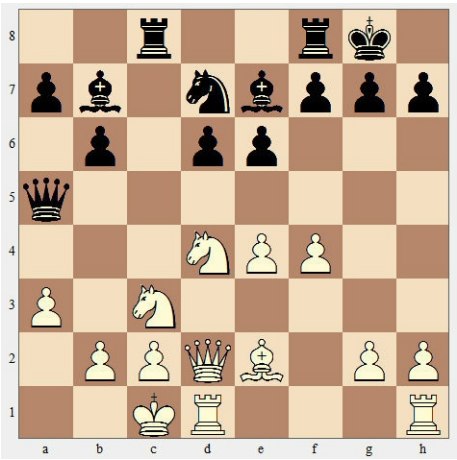
In this lesson, we will learn about some typical examples on how to gain material advantage.

Let's start with some positions where, the target is to win a Queen.

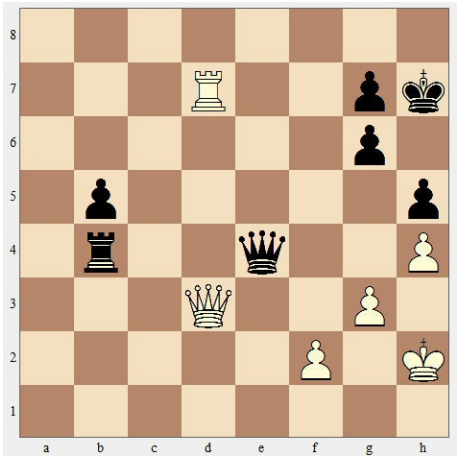


In the above example, Black is a Pawn ahead but has prematurely gotten the Queen out. White can trap the Queen by playing 1.Bg5.

The next example shows another situation where the Black Queen has no escape after it is attacked.



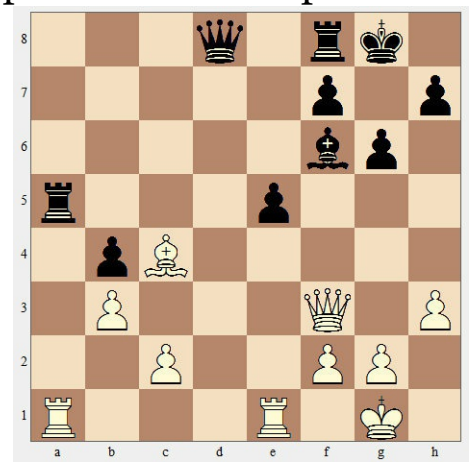
White plays ***1.Nb3*** and the Queen is trapped again.



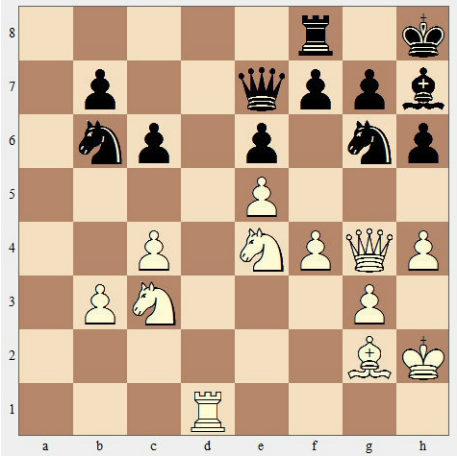
Whenever you have a (White) Rook on the seventh rank, it is usually a good sign, especially while there are still Queens in the board. In this case White can force Black to give up the Rook to avoid getting checkmated.

The simple ***1.Qc3*** is extremely powerful. Black has to play 1...Rd4 but it means that White wins a Rook.

How can White win a piece in the next position?

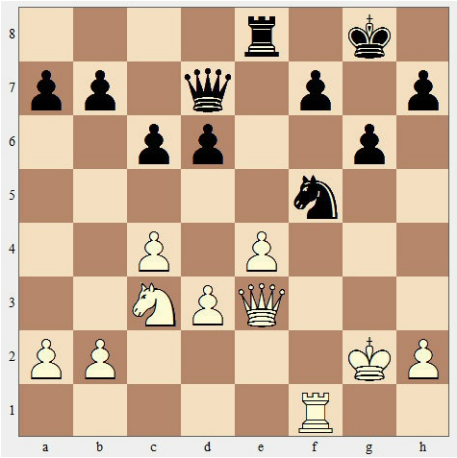


Simply trade Rooks on ***a5***. The Black Queen is "overworked". It will either take back on a5 and lose the Bishop on f6 or accept losing a Rook.



In the next example, try to figure out which Black piece is getting in trouble?

It is the *Knight on g6*. All White needs to do are to attack and trap it with ***1.h5***.
The next example is a tricky one. It is all about pins.



Black has just captured a White Pawn on f5 with the Knight. It seems like a smart idea as White's Pawn on e4 is pinned.
However, White can create a pin as well by moving the Queen away from the attack ***1.Qh3!*** Now the Black Knight is indeed lost.
As you can see, it is important to try to look deeper into a problem and not always believe what it first appears to be.

Lesson 17 – Test

1-6. It is Black to move. Find a way to win material in each of the next six puzzles.

1.

2.

3.

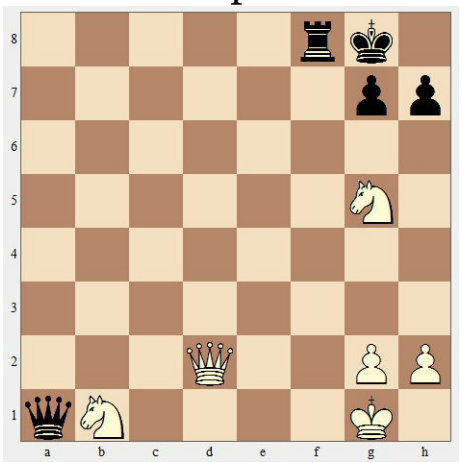
4.

5.

6.

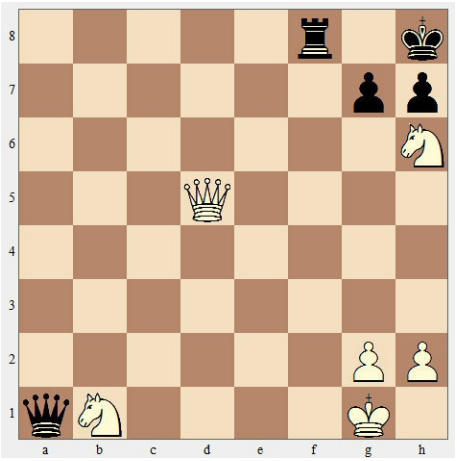
Lesson 18: QUEEN COMBINATIONS

In this lesson, you will see various combinations which lead to checkmate by force and they involve a Queen sacrifice. We will start with the famous "smothered mate" pattern.



Here White can force an elegant checkmate in five moves even after Black's best defense.

1.Qd5+ Kh8 2.Nf7+ Kg8 (If 2...Rxf7 instead, then Black gets checkmated on the back rank after 3.Qd8+) ***3.Nh6+*** (This double check is a key move in the combination to make sure that the Knight controls the g8 square.) ***3...Kh8***



Now comes the brilliant combination:

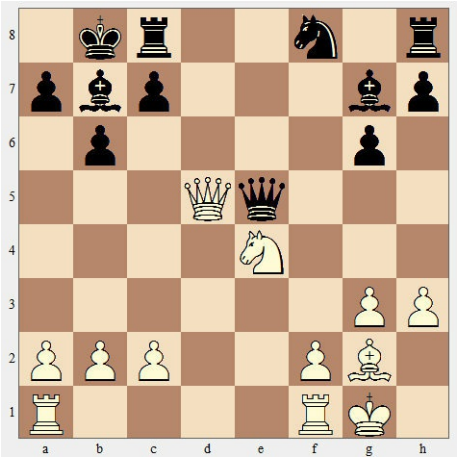
4.Qg8+!! White sacrifices the Queen to force checkmate on the next move. ***4...Rxg8 5.Nf7 checkmate***.

The next few examples will include the “discovery” theme.

In this position, White can checkmate in two moves. However, it is not with *1.hxg5* because then Black has a nice way to force checkmate with *1…Qd2+ 2.Kb1 Qd1+! 3.Rxd1* and *3…Rxd1* checkmate.

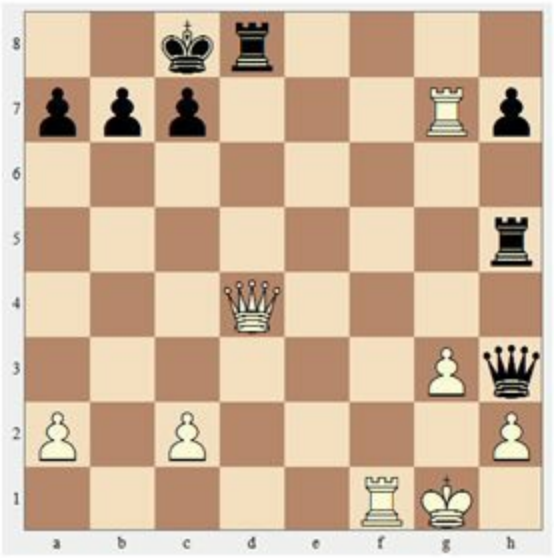
The correct answer is ***1.Qxh7+!*** forcing ***1…Kxh7*** and now ***2.hxg5*** checkmate!

The next example is a three move combination to checkmate.
This is a true beauty. ***1.Qxb7+! Kxb7 2.Nc5+ (double check) 2… Kb8 and 3.Na6 checkmate.***



And finally here are a couple examples of the “back rank problem” theme.

1.



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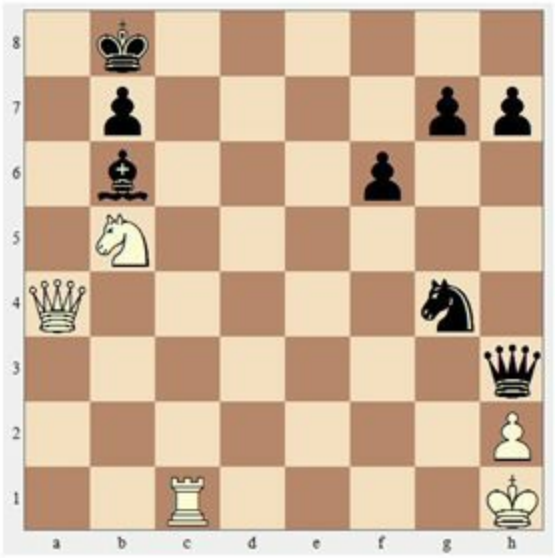


Here are the solutions:

1) 1.Qxd8+ Kxd8 2.Rf8 checkmate.
2) 1.Qa8+ Kxa8 2.Rc8 checkmate.

Lesson 18 – Test

1-6. It is Black to move. Find the checkmate combination in all six puzzles.

1.

2.

3.

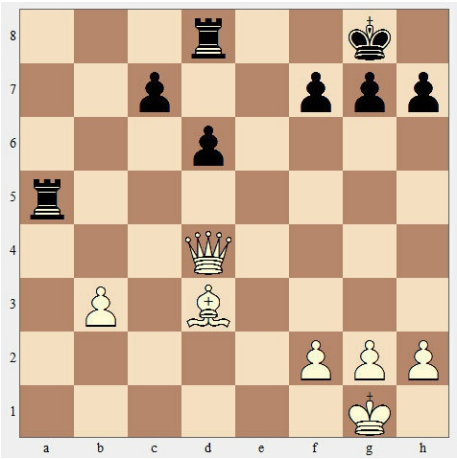
4.

5.

6.

Lesson 19: COUNTER-TRAP

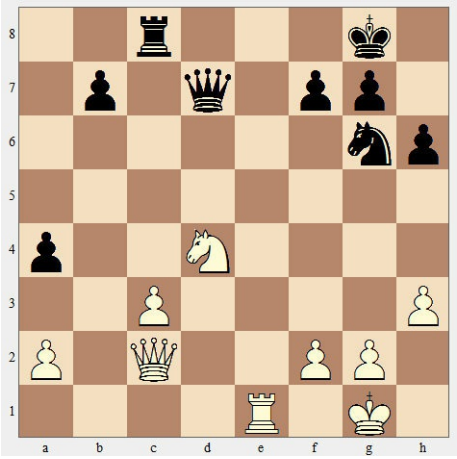
You have learned about a lot of different tricks and traps in the previous lessons. Now let's see some examples where one sides sets up a trap but the other side calculates deeper and sets up a "counter-trap".



In this example, White clearly has a better position. White also notices an opportunity to try to win at least a Pawn with ***1.Bxh7***+ and if ***1...Kxh7*** then ***2.Qh4***+ fork. Would that be a wise idea?

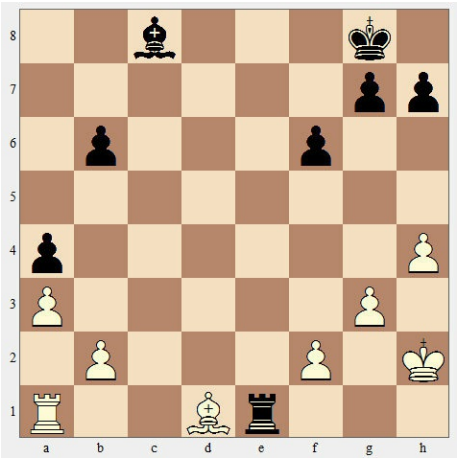
No, it actually is a serious mistake. After ***2...Kg6***, White will not be able to safely capture the Black Rook on d8 due to the back rank problem.

Therefore, in the starting position, White should simply solve the back rank problem at once by playing for example *1.g3* while maintaining the advantage.



In the position above, Black has many moves to choose from. One of these choices is a cute looking combination with ***1...Qxd4***.

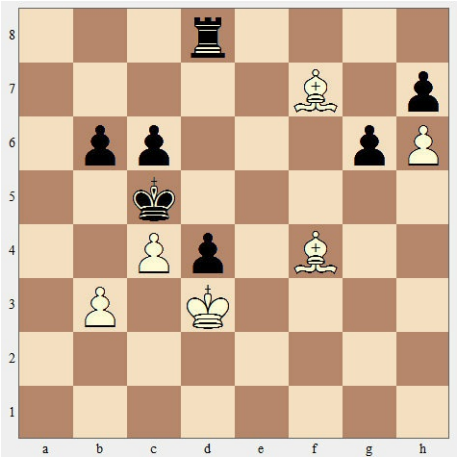
In reality, that would be falling into White's "counter-trap".
After 1...Qxd4, White can play ***2.Re8***+ to deflect the Black Rook from the "c" file to gain material advantage.
In the next example, it looks like Black can use the existing pin to win material.



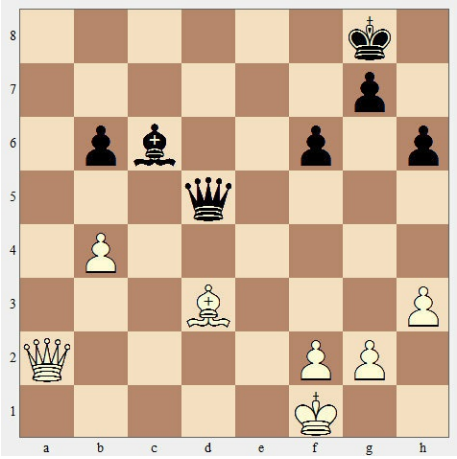
In this position, ***1...Bg4*** using the pin on the White Bishop on d1 seems like a good move. But it does not work. The problem for Black would come after the discovery with ***2.Bb3***+! After ***2...axb3 3.Rxe1*** and White wins an exchange. Therefore, it would have been better if Black moves the King to a dark square *(Kf8)* to avoid any check by White's light color Bishop.

It is important to remember that it is not unusual that a "relative pin" can become a potential set up for a "discovery" combination as we

have seen in this example.



In the above position, Black is "almost" winning a Bishop after ***1... Rf8***, which creates a skewer.
However, "almost" doesn't quite count in chess or in life. White can respond with a "counter-trap" ***2.b4***+ and after ***2...Kxb4 3.Bd6***+ fork winning Black's Rook.
The next example is a super tricky one.



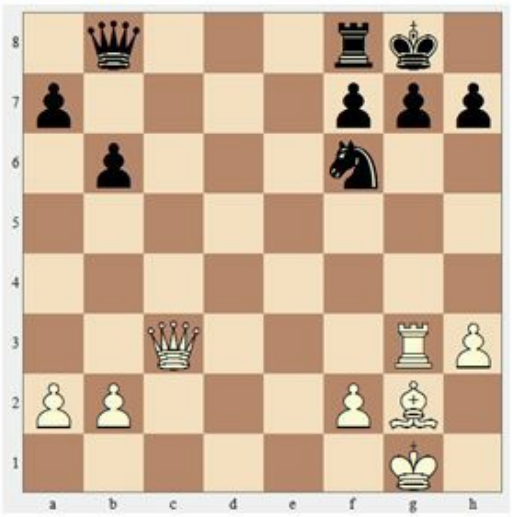
Try figure out which side is winning here.
The first move looks easy ***1.Bc4*** pinning the Black Queen. But did you consider what will White do after ***1...Bb5***, which is a counter-pin?

White is still winning, but only if you find ***2.Qa8***+.

Lesson 19 – Test

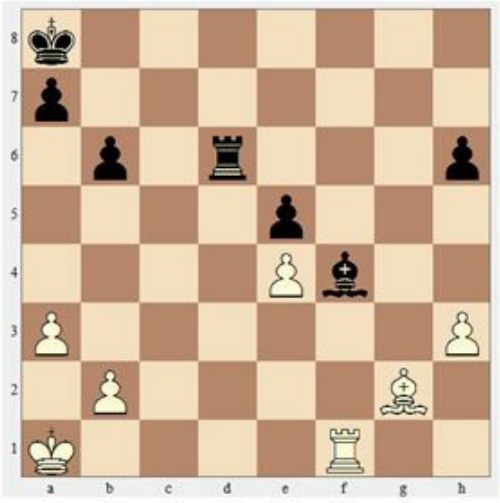
1. In the next position, what do you think of 1.Re7? Is it a good move? Why or why not?

2. In the puzzle below, after 1.Qxf6 is White winning or Black? Why?



3. Who do you think is better in the next example? Why?

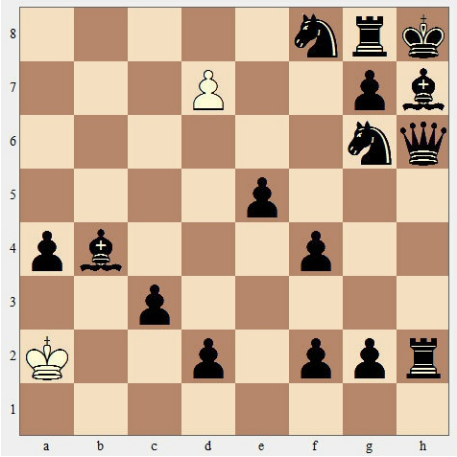
4. In the following position, can White win a piece with 1.Rxf4?



Lesson 20: SOME AMAZING POSITIONS.

In all the previous lessons, you learned important tools to understand chess better and to improve your knowledge of the game. In this lesson, I would like you to simply enjoy all the beauty, amazing, and unbelievable things chess has to offer. My hope is that whether or not you become a competitive chess player, you will keep chess as a hobby for its own beauty.

Have fun!

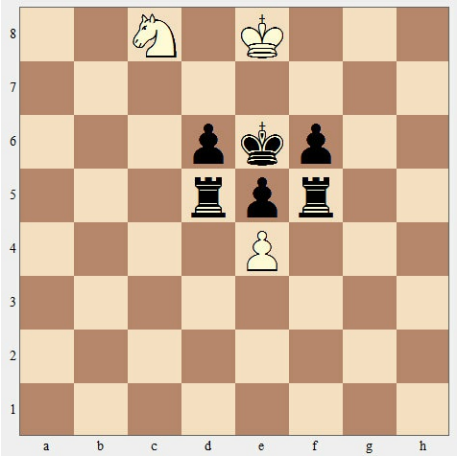


In the position above, you see a curious situation. Black still has all its pieces on the board. All White has is a one little Pawn in addition to the King. It is like David versus Goliath!

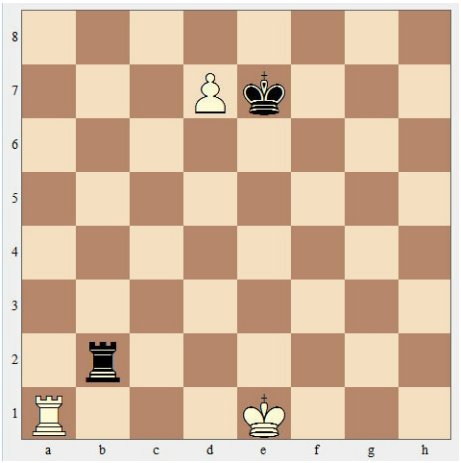
The unbelievable part is that it is White to move and checkmate in just two moves regardless how Black responds!

The answer is ***to promote the Pawn, not to Queen, but to a Knight***! Black now is helpless against the upcoming checkmate with

2.Nf7.



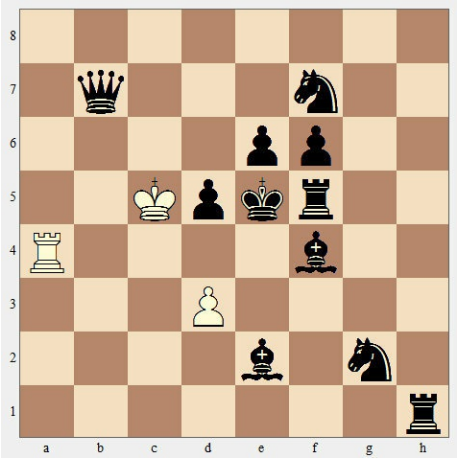
Here despite Black having major material advantage, White wins. Surprisingly White doesn't capture either of the Black Rooks but plays ***1.Ne7!*** to win the game. What an esthetically beautiful position!



How can White save the last Pawn? With 1.Rd1? That is a logical try but Black will then respond with *1…Rb8*, followed by *2…Rd8* and then *3…Rxd7* and save the game.
In this position, it is important to remember all the rules of chess. Remember, White still has the right to castle to the Queenside.

However, playing ***1.0-0-0*** immediately does not work for the same reason as *1.Rd1* doesn't.

The impressive solution to the problem is ***1.d8 (Q)+! Kxd8*** and now ***2.0-0-0*** forking the Black King and Rook.



In this position, Black has once again almost all its army on board while White has not much left. But as the saying goes, it is “Quality over Quantity”.

It is White to move and checkmate in two moves. How?

1.Re4+! Isn’t it shocking that White is giving up the last Rook? Yes! ***1...dxe4*** and now White’s last piece on the board, the little Pawn, becomes the hero**.** ***2.d4*** and White checkmates Black right in the middle of the board!

Congratulations on finishing your training! Studying chess can be a challenging endeavor, especially when first starting out. But after you begin to improve and deepen your knowledge of the game, you should not only begin to enjoy the game more than ever before but also be winning more games and see your rating increase.

If you implement the skills covered in this volume you can already call yourself a strong chess player and are ready to begin playing in formal matches and tournaments if you so choose. In order to keep your skills current you should play serious games of chess as often as possible, at least once per week. Of course, I encourage you to review the text on a regular basis and continue to test yourself with the puzzles throughout the book.

I wish you much luck in your chess career as you continue to improve and enjoy this wonderful game!

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